

Великая Отечественная: Неизвестная война
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Abstract

Front-line counterintelligence officers, "Smershevites" ... Their activities are shrouded in a dense veil of secrets, gossip and fiction, which the author of this book, who himself served for two years in SMERSH for two years and knows firsthand about the work of "special officers", tried to open.

Being an active officer of the State Security Committee, V.I. Baranov did not have the right to publish an autobiographical work, but although this book is not written in the first person, it is absolutely documentary, based on real events and specific facts from the operational work of military counterintelligence.

Viktor Baranov tells in a fascinating and detailed, in the smallest detail about the professional activities of the employees of the SMERSH Main Counterintelligence Directorate at the turning point of the war, about their difficult front-line service, about the daily struggle between good and evil, conscience and duty.

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- [Viktor Innokent'evich Baranov](#) _____
 - [Chapter I. PE IN THE](#) _____
 - [DIVISION Chapter II. MASTER](#) _____
 - [DONOSOK Chapter III. TECHNIQUE OF](#) _____
 - [INFORMATION Chapter IV. DIVISIONAL](#) _____
 - [MEETING Chapter V. SECRETS OF THE](#) _____
 - [OFFICE Chapter VI.](#) _____
 - [INVESTIGATION Chapter VII. OPERATIONAL](#) _____
 - [ACCOUNTING OF THE DEPARTMENT Chapter VIII.](#) _____
 - [STROKE TO THE PORTRAIT OF THE](#) _____
 - [COMMANDER CHAPTER IX. THE FATE OF PRISONERS OF WAR](#) _____
 - [Chapter X. Plunder in the rear of](#) _____
 - [the active army Chapter XI. SECRETS OF THE](#) _____
 - [SAFE CHAPTER XII. HOSTAGE OF TWO SYSTEMS](#) _____
 - [Chapter XIII. PENETRATION INTO THE](#) _____
 - [INTELLIGENT GROUP Chapter XIV. ON](#) _____
 - [NOBILITY AND INTELLIGENCE Chapter](#) _____
 - [XV. PREPARATION FOR DENUSION Chapter XVI. FRONT HEARINGS Chapter XVII.](#) _____

- Chapter XVIII. FIND THE GULPIVE CHAPTER
- XIX. OCCUPATIONS IN THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE FINAL CHECK
- Chapter XX. UNSUCCESSFUL DENUM
- Chapter XXI. TUMANOV'S FEARS Chapter XXII.
- THE END OF INTRIGUATION AND OPINION ON DEPORTATION Chapter XXIII. PROPHETIC
- DREAM
- Chapter XXIV. THE WAY TO THE
- THRESHOLD Chapter XXV. COOPERATION IN REPLACEMENT OF
- CATORGA CHAPTER XXVI. THE HOPES AND
- EXPECTATIONS OF SIVERS Chapter XXVII.
- COMPLETED THRESHOLD CHAPTER
- XXVIII. THE FATAL ENCOUNTER CHAPTER XXIX. FLIGHT, OPERATION
- FAILURE AND PAYING
- INSTEAD OF

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 - [41](#)
 - [42](#)
 - [43](#)
 - [44](#)
 - [45](#)
 - [46](#)
 - [47](#)
 - [48](#)
 - [49](#)
-

Viktor Innokentyevich Baranov
SMERSH. Everyday life of a
front-line counterintelligence officer

Chapter I. PE IN THE DIVISION

On an early February blizzard morning, the Germans stole two of our female snipers from a combat position. On that day, heavy snow began to fall, and an almost never-ending blizzard began. The incident was reported to the authorities. The divisional commander called the chief of staff, Colonel Lepin, and an order appeared: to investigate and punish those responsible! The disappearance of any member of the active army, especially from the front line, was considered an emergency; and this was reported to the command of the division, army, front, and sometimes it reached the reports of the General Staff and GlavPU[1] .

By itself, such a case would not deserve attention. What can the disappearance of two soldiers against the backdrop of gigantic losses mean in 1943, a victorious, but also the most difficult year in terms of human losses, when trains carried hundreds of thousands of wounded to the cities of the Volga region, the Urals, Central Asia, Siberia, where hospitals and schools were clogged with crippled front-line soldiers and everything else that could only be adapted for hospitals.

But as was customary in those days, such emergency situations could cast doubt on the reports of the divisional commander, regiment commander, battalion commander about the combat readiness of the unit, the impregnability of the occupied line, the incessant combat and political training, and also (the holy of holies!) The high political vigilance of the personnel, as mentioned in many orders of the Supreme!

Front-line political workers with their own selected party Komsomol activists, consisting of agitators, their deputies, company and platoon assistants, literate and energetic Komsomol members, distributors and readers of the division combat leaflet - all of them, having used this fact, could beat it like a spicy seasoning to the boring dogmas of political education to whip up an already alarming front-line situation. And until the next state of emergency, they will procrastinate this case in order to instill in the trench masses (again!) high vigilance, and at the same time slander, to strengthen the sense of devotion and the state of trustworthiness to the invisible, but unshakable System.

The regimental special officer from Smersh [2] , Lieutenant Kuleshov, getting acquainted with the resolution of his superiors, understood one thing: he and no one else would have to investigate the operational part - the sniper platoon was assigned to the personnel of his regiment.

But the lieutenant suffered from a toothache, he wanted to lie down in the dugout, hide, forget himself from the pain that had tormented him since the evening, and therefore everything around him seemed vile and uncomfortable. However, he remembered that the immediate superior - Captain Sazonov - was strict and picky, especially regarding the disappearance of personnel from the front line. And the story of the chief surfaced in his memory, how, while still being a regimental special officer, he conducted an inquiry into the disappearance of Corporal Krasikov, a former collective farm brigadier, from the military guard, and established that the corporal let his partners fall asleep - two soldiers, and he himself disappeared with a rifle. As Sazonov said, it was late autumn, and he, together with the regimental scout pathfinder, established by footprints on the grass frosted over from the first frost that the fugitive draped towards the enemy, about which a protocol was drawn up, and the interrogators signed under the scheme-map of the area. But less than a month later, the corporal was detained somewhere in the rear and convicted as a deserter. They also sent a copy of the interrogation to the regiment, where Krasikov indicated that they should not be looking for him, and that he deliberately went to the German positions, and then, having wrapped his feet in grass, returned to the guards and went to the rear.

Sazonov received a scolding from the leadership, and he had to write an explanation, and then at operational meetings they often declined his last name - until the very capture of Smolensk, when the entire headquarters of the division, including the Special Department with the head, his secretary Zina, deputy, died during the platoon. Then, bombing , commandant's two soldiers from unexpectedly, Captain Sazonov was appointed head of the Department. And, as Kuleshov knew, he expected the rank of major, showed all kinds of zeal in his service, nagged and itched for every reason, hoarse for various reasons (including from the use of a hundred-gram "People's Commissar's" front) tenor, and for his love of singing he was able drunk in a narrow circle of officers of the headquarters of the division, he received the mild nickname Kenar. But he did not know about this, and if he had known, he probably would not have been offended: singing and listening to singing was his passion. Time will pass, and Sazonov himself will remember

canaries and about his native Torzhok, where he once listened to them from the open window of the headmaster's

official apartment. Lieutenant Kuleshov walked to the scene dressed in a battered quilted jacket, wadded pants, huge tarpaulin boots, no different from the equipment of soldiers, if not for the commander's wide belt over a quilted jacket with the same "TT" in a shabby holster, a brand new zigey cap with earflaps and through on the shoulder is a dapper, real leather pre-war tablet with a narrow leather strap. Such was the fashion of a front-line officer in the third year of the war. He walked with two

regimental interrogating officers, as young as he was, and very much like him in dress, but without brand new caps and leather tablets. Each pistol holster is not on the right side, but on the left side, closer to the center of the abdomen. It was a special chic, as officers from the front line wore their personal weapons. There, no one made comments on how and from which side to wear their "trellis". Kuleshov's group stopped at the edge of a young spruce forest. The special officer sat down on a broken Christmas tree, right in the snow, looked at the trophy watch: soon Sazonov was also supposed to come up. Everyone in the regiment

knew that Kuleshov had recently become a special officer, but in general he was an old-timer of the unit; arrived with a division from the Kalinin Front, was slightly wounded by a mine fragment, after Smolensk - a platoon commander of a control company in a neighboring regiment and was unexpectedly promoted to special officers - a rare case for this service. He was already known in his regiment, he also had friends, and the company commander began to respectfully call him by his patronymic, respecting his restraint and modesty in dealing with the motley composition of the co

And then an unexpected order, and even after a two-week training session, where yesterday's platoon "vankas" like him listened with a feeling of burning curiosity to what was called the work of the organs. Maybe somewhere the "Smershevites" were thoroughly prepared, but the huge gears of the army in the field frayed hundreds and thousands of medium commanders. Perhaps the "mansions" (as the soldiers called them) did not march in infantry combat formations and few of them knew what a trench battle was, but there were also bombings, artillery shelling,

mines on the countless roads and paths of the front line, and many other misfortunes that awaited man in this long war.

The loss of a platoon commander could be made up for by an experienced sergeant, but it was impossible to replace a regimental counterintelligence officer with just another commander! It was a different diocese - its own rules, and orders, and instructions. This is, perhaps, what Lieutenant Kuleshov learned best at the

special gatherings. From the fact that the platoon commander became a special officer, there were many benefits, but there were also inconveniences. He knew many in the regiment, they also knew him, but many yesterday's friends with secret envy said that someone had "moved" him to Smersh under patronage, some began to smile ingratiatingly at meetings, and only two of them, Shchelgunov and Petyuh, stopped noticing Sergei and defiantly turned away from his gaze.

The head of the Special Division of the division, Captain Sazonov, unexpectedly appeared from a lowland densely overgrown with red flakes, with his liaison, a small, strong man, and a slightly lagging deputy, Major Bondarev. Different things were said about Sazonov: he was an old-timer of the division, a personnel special officer, called up at the beginning of the war from the reserve, where he taught in the regional center. But his deputy, who came from the political department of the recently disbanded corps, had previously worked in the regional executive committee, in some special sector for the protection of state secrets, which he was unusually proud of among his entourage and spoke about it, lowering his voice to a whisper, with long pauses, trying to produce impression on interlocutors. Both chiefs were dressed in white, but already patchy coats with field epaulettes.

Kuleshov reported to Sazonov in the form, and then in a hazing manner, grabbing his cheek with his hand: "Comrade Captain, there is no urine to endure, the pain is hellish." The captain looked at him with annoyance and, with pressure in his voice, scolded him for his sluggishness in the investigation, almost accusing him of being responsible for what had happened. The lieutenant was silent, knowing that it was useless to justify himself, and, for the sake of formality, stretching his hands along his wadded trousers, he stood, frowningly looking at his feet. An hour later, when the inspection was over and a diagram and sketches of the area were sketched out by hand, Sazonov, as a senior teacher in a dispassionate tone, said: "Well, it seems clear - our women were dragged away from here: when it snow

(then only a word that came into vogue at the front) right there: they penetrated the hole, threw loops on their legs, pulled it out and ... go to their side! And, turning towards the lieutenant, he added: "You, Kuleshov, take an explanation from the platoon commander Vaskov, how and when he appointed these girls to the outfit, and present a memo on the investigation. If necessary, interrogate, inflict article 95 of the Criminal Code [3] if they are locked up!" Bondarev was silent, he simply did not know that in these cases he should speak as a deputy, but, out of the habit of a political worker, he wanted to say something about the loss of vigilance, deceit and treachery of the Nazis and about many other things, which was set out in the last Order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief to twenty-sixth anniversary of the Red Army and Navy. My friends, you do

not know what the order of the Supreme Commander was then for a political worker! And, perhaps, this is more than the Revelation of John of the last chapter of the New Testament for a fanatical Catholic from a remote Italian, French or Spanish province, who wholeheartedly believes in predicting a terrible future for the rest of mankind! A link to an order from a political worker of that time was always ready for action, like a rifle or a small sapper shovel for a soldier! Political workers drew joy and inspiration from orders (it was bread for the large army of the GlavPU): they, and only they, who knew the victorious theory of Marxism, can broadcast, interpret and explain the words and thoughts of the Leader, carry them to the masses, as it seemed to them, eager to accept them with glee.

Service in the political department of the corps taught Bondarev to appreciate the Orders of the Supreme: for hours they enthusiastically disassembled the political meaning of almost every word, outlined entire pages of the development of Stalin's new strategy according to the stingy, almost telegraphic text of individual paragraphs, expressed admiration for the brevity and expressiveness of the language, were touched by the clarity of the tasks set, deciphered them unsaid!

Bondarev's fighting friends in the political department, together with his boss, Colonel Fyodor Ivanovich Khramtsov, without waiting for the main explanations on the orders from GlavPU, hastily carried the Leader's word to the army environment, hastily, without fear of oversalting, added to it everything that was possible, starting from the class struggle

strengthening the ranks of the native CPSU (b) and its reserve - selflessly devoted to the cause of Lenin-Stalin Komsomol - and much more in terms of educating the personnel of devotion, stamina and courage in the fight against fascism, and also that verbal peeling, which is born in abundance in individuals professionally engaged in political work. And when the political department's eloquence and their handicraft preparations had already dried up and the army people, stupefied from endless repetitions about the genius of the Leader, frankly yawned and slept, by this time from Moscow the GlavPU field communications sent out methodical printed on good paper to all fronts, internal military districts and fleets instructions, annexes and clarifications to the Order, and its second discussion began. These instructions and training manuals were developed expertly, everything was indicated there: where, what, when and under what conditions to explain: His military genius, state wisdom, the gift of foresight and much more! So in the bowels of GlavPU a tale of ten Stalinist blows was born. And again, for the second time, according to instructions from above, the combat activities of formations and units were replenished with details, overgrown with heroic facts with some exaggerations regarding the destruction of Nazi troops and captured trophies. True, sometimes there were timid confessions in attempts to disobey orders by individual commanders, shortcomings in driving troops in offensive battles, interaction with other units, but, basically, on the recommendation of the same Glavpurovtsy, this was all due to a lack of political preparedness, imperfection of party organs in front-line conditions. Honestly earning their bread, the front-line legion of political workers tacitly

agreed with the conclusions and recommendations of the inaccessible GlavPU. According to his instructions, the political staff of the Western Front was to resume the study of the short course of the CPSU (b). And if this was impossible in the offensive battles of the summer-autumn period, then for political workers who were already on the defensive, a hot time began: replenishment of the party ranks, political study according to an expanded program, the publication of a newspaper, gatherings of company agitators, Komsomol work and much more that caused deafness in combat commanders

irritation. But the hidden levers of control made it possible to direct the personnel into the beaten track of countless political events and, as they said in the political department, "load" the personnel ideologically to the eyeballs.

These are the thoughts about working with the Orders of the Supreme and recent political department life visited Bondarev at that moment, and he suddenly realized that, based on his work experience and seniority, here only he is the only politically responsible person. And looking at the back of Captain Sazonov, he was already mentally looking for convincing facts for the future denunciation of his boss.

Chapter II. MASTER DONOSOK

He wrote denunciations for a long time - and always against his superiors, colleagues and even relatives. He loved this fascinating but dangerous occupation. And when the stone thrown by him reached its goal, he was unspeakably glad, but after a while the itch of denunciation took possession of him again, and he wrote and wrote. All this began in the harsh but unforgettable time of his youth, during the years of the struggle against the NEPmen, kulaks, pest specialists. The newspapers of that time, getting tired of the daily revelations of organizations, groups, individuals - all those who wanted to harm the Soviet government, published notes by village and work correspondents about the intrigues of unfinished enemies, their disguise as fellow travelers - the

builders of the workers' and peasants' state. Alyosha Bondarev, a student of an agricultural technical school in Smolensk, then understood and realized that in this mess you can help the authorities and keep your interest. He well remembered his first denunciation. After graduating from a technical school in 1930, he was sent to work as a technician in the city of Dragobuzh at a flax factory, where he successfully wrote an anonymous letter to the OGPU about his colleague Nikolai Ivanovich Stulov about his old-fashioned statements that, they say, the new government demands a lot, but pays little (!), and that he, Stulov, did not accept two batches of linen, referring to its

poor quality; therefore, the plant did not fulfill the plan for the fourth quarter. Soon Stulov was called to the district, then suspended from work, and about a month later he was sent with his family to the Urals. Bondarev envied Nikolai Ivanovich: he had a friendly, pretty wife and two teenage sons, a large and warm house with a farm on the outskirts of the village. But that is not why he wrote the letter to the OGPU. Just out of curiosity - whether the authorities would believe the nameless notebook sheet with deliberately distorted handwriting. Did not expect - believe! True, people in the village said that allegedly Stulov's brother had previously served in the tsarist police in Vologda, which is why he was expelled as a socially dangerous element. But the novice informer knew that he did not have any brothers, and now he was sure that his "chest stone" helped the technologist to leave un

Further, Alexei Mikhailovich already began to improve his work, depending on the circumstances: he composed his opuses on behalf of honest workers, sympathizers of the party, fighters for the Leninist truth, and even women who were ready to talk about sabotage in their production. He was inspired, warmed and reassured by the very idea of denunciation with impunity, and gradually he himself began to believe that he was doing everything right, and that he was exaggerating, cheating with facts - that is, the relevant authorities, and they should figure it out. Developing the technique of denunciation, Bondarev sat for a long time over his work, lovingly adjusting everything that could accuse, denigrate a person. Only once

did he make a mistake that almost cost him his career, and maybe his freedom. It was a cool time then: 1938 was ending, and he, already working in the sector for the protection of state secrets, took a dislike to the newly appointed head of the agitprop department, Romanov. Everything about him irritated him: his folded figure, well-set head with wavy blond hair, always neat clothes, but most importantly, his ability to speak brightly, simply, intelligibly. It was rumored that he allegedly came for a short time - they intend to send him to study in Moscow - and that he is the adopted son of a member of the Central Committee of the party, a well-known party member from the most civilian, a native of these places. Alexei Mikhailovich did not believe these rumors and was greatly mistaken. Romanov turned out to be a tough nut to crack, and it was not easy to collect any "compromising evidence" on him. I had to work hard, and in six months he collected, as it seemed to him from the past "pebbles", strong material, which would not be slow to affect the fate of his "ward"! He was already looking forward to the fact that what he had planned would happen: a lovingly nurtured child would go for a walk at the top, acquiring formidable resolutions, instructions, return to the regional committee, and that's where it would begin! .. Bondarev was already rubbing his hands, but all the deadlines for returning the denunciation had passed - it was quiet, tedious, time passed tediously, and he already wanted to shout: "Why are you delaying? after all, everything is indicated there, everything is painted ?! He was suffocating with anger and could not understand how it was so: he spent almost six months collecting everything to the smallest detail, went to lectures by Soviet and party

notes of his speeches, but there was nothing to catch on - everything was in the Soviet and party way correctly! This

chief propagandist of the regional committee was very lucky. The authorities sympathized with him, all the secretaries and typists adored him for his clear, hazel-colored eyes, clean, young spiritual face, bachelor position, but he managed to put himself in such a way that nothing stuck to him. Wherever he was, he behaved simply, with dignity, and even the obkom old-timers, who were jealous of newcomers - strangers, showed respect, calling him by his first name and patronymic. So gradually he fit into the circle of the regional committee, became a familiar figure of countless presidiums, conferences and other events. Though Romanov was lucky, but once he made a mistake. In one of his speeches, having fallen into the usual rut of assessments of the international situation, borrowed from various magazines of the political publishing kitchen, editorials of central newspapers and, as a rule, with a great delay in their understanding in the provinces, he, having paid tribute to the intrigues of international imperialism, out of habit added several condemning phrases about his vanguard - German fascism. This is where he got caught! How did he not notice that for six months now the denunciations of fascism had disappeared from the editorials of large and small newspapers, passions about its preparation for war had subsided, there were no usual reports about the struggle of the German working class and its leader, the fiery communist, languishing in the dungeons, Ernst Thälmann .

And suddenly, after some time, in the editorial of Pravda, in black and white: the intrigues of the imperialists are being prepared in London and Paris, behind the back of the USSR they are inciting other states against it. Our hero immediately truncated: German fascism is not our enemy, which means that Romanov made a political blunder - he included Germany among the enemies! Aleksey Mikhailovich was delighted at this blunder and immediately in his denunciation developed the idea that the head of the department was deliberately publicly distorting the facts of the foreign policy of the party and government. When he finished writing and read what he had written, then, in his mind, it turned out that Romanov was a hidden enemy from among the followers of the Trotskyist-Zinoviev bloc! After carefully rewriting the text by hand in block letters, he stuffed it into an envelope and, with a sigh of joy, dropped it into the box. Now all that's left is to

He waited, but impatience seized him like a hunter in ambush! And suddenly he accidentally learns from an employee of the accounting sector of the regional committee, the old maid Tatyana Vasilyevna, who somehow sympathized with him, that an instructor had arrived from Moscow, from the Central Committee of the party itself, and was investigating an anonymous letter to Romanov. Bondarev went cold, fear struck him completely. He immediately wanted to run somewhere, hide from everyone, hide. Thoughts were confused, he was haunted by a vision: he was arrested, he was imprisoned and sent to some camp in Siberia, - he grew cold from these thoughts, everything fell out of his hands and only by an effort of will he forced himself to stay at work still cheerful and v

But those around him noticed in him confusion and unusual nervousness in his behavior. His boss discovered it first. Once, looking somewhere over Bondarev's head with his slightly slanted eyes, he said: "What happened to you, look at yourself, you are kind of ruffled, I don't like you! Come on, your Klavka found out about amorous deeds, huh ?! Confess now, don't be afraid. We'll slap the stricter for immorality, and that's it!" And, pleased with his joke, he laughed. And Bondarev, depicting amazement on his face, almost with tears in his eyes began to prove his marital fidelity, and the more he spoke and justified himself, the more his boss teased him, enjoying the fact that his subordinate took seriously his joke. On this they parted. A short conversation with the chief helped Bondarev to look at himself from the outside, and he, as a not stupid person, managed to break himself, trying not to show his cowardice and cowardice outwardly. Sometimes, after a sleepless night, he wanted to go and tell about his deed, but he knew for sure that an honest confession of guilt and frankness in his party environment were considered a sign of weakness, a manifestation of the inability to belong to the leading link and would cause open contempt even among a non-party economic manager. asset.

To help the Central Committee instructor, the local "NKVD" assigned an elderly, experienced forensic specialist, who spoke with Bondarev a week later. Dead with fear, Bondarev was ready to confess and confess. But suddenly his "tormentor" (as he mentally dubbed the gray-whiskered investigator) got a phone call

the chief, and he hurriedly, hiding the papers in his briefcase, muttered to Bondarev that he should come tomorrow an hour earlier. This delay, perhaps, sealed his fate. Neither tomorrow nor the day after tomorrow, no one else called him, and only later did he find out that on that day both the head of the NKVD department and five of his employees, including that gray-moustached one, had been arrested for "violations" of social law. Then the urgent need to establish an anonymous name disappeared, the papers were lost somewhere along with the participants in the search, and then Romanov himself was recalled to Moscow for military-political work and to strengthen the central apparatus of GlavPURKKA, which had thinned from incessant "purges". But for a long time Bondarev could not forget those terrible days, and it seemed to him that Romanov knew about his authorship from the NKVD officers, and only when he left, Alexei Mikhailovich walked away, calmed down, but for a long time he could not forget this incident.

And now, walking behind Sazonov, he tried to collect together the mistakes and shortcomings of his boss and set them down in writing, but immediately drove away these dangerous thoughts.

They had not gone another hundred meters across the virgin tract of loose snow, along the same lowland from which they had come, when suddenly there was a short whistle of a mine and Sazonov walking in front of him with a liaison soldier were already lying at his feet, and he, not yet understanding what made them fall, stood in disbelief. No one had time to shout to him, when suddenly a tight pillow of hot air pushed him in the chest, in the face, threw him onto the path. Red fire flashing like lightning with black smoke and a simultaneous blow to the eardrums - that was his first sensation from a mine that exploded about fifty meters away. Something soft and damp hit hard in the face, and he, terrified by the close explosion, deafened, distraught, jumped to his feet, but his boss managed to pull him behind the floor with force, and again there was a hot blow of the blast wave, and a strong jump earth under the body, and again a deafening explosion. Aleksey Mikhailovich, already distraught from mine explosions, tried to jump up and run, but each time Sazonov stopped these attempts, swearing wildly, and when the fourth or fifth mine staggered along the lowland, the liaison soldier and Sazonov jumped up, as if on a single command, and rushed back, towards the front edge. After four minutes of frantic running across virgin soil, they fell to the bottom of a large snow-covered pit.

The mortar shelling continued for several more minutes, and they only listened to the explosions, not leaning out of cover. At close breaks, Bondarev shuddered, pulling his head into his shoulders, while his liaison soldier diligently and calmly rewound the windings. He was shaking all over, he was seized with fear: why did the Germans open fire (maybe this was an offensive?) And why did his boss with a liaison rush towards the front line?! He already imagined himself in captivity, how they would shoot him, having learned that he was a "special smershevets", and now he already regretted that he was the senior in rank here and should obey his boss, the captain. He began to suspect that Sazonov had deliberately taken him to the front line, and although there was no whistle of mines, deafening explosions and the nasty garlic smell of their explosive filling, the enemy was within easy reach. While they were sitting in the pit, he, having lost both his memory and the ability to think, obeyed only fear, tried to jump out of hiding, and each time the chief, without ceremony, with a deft blow, knocked him down, leaning on him with his whole body, but only with the help of a messenger managed to keep a subordinate.

When the shelling ended, Sazonov let him go and good-naturedly, but with noticeable disdain in his voice, threw out to him: "At least you washed your mordochentia, it's all in your mud." The cold snow finally brought him to his senses, and only now did he realize his cowardice and cowardice - he was painfully ashamed in front of his boss and this fat soldier for his momentary weakness. As if guessing his thoughts, Sazonov said: "You, major, probably haven't been under fire for a long time, you don't have enough experience, the most important thing here is to find any shelter, and then decide what to do next! .." And, as it were, explaining his behavior during the shelling, he began to set out in detail what the enemy wanted to achieve. "You understand," calling Bondarev by his patronymic, "Mikhalych, because the Germans calculated everything in advance: our arrival at the sniper position, and where, and from where we will approach and leave, and their observer is over there, you see, there is a high-rise on the other side of the river, about two kilometers from here, - he reported everything, and they have a battery in the same place. They just didn't take into account one thing - the earth in the lowland is damp, swampy, here the fragments are more and more stuck in the swamp, and if the soil was harder, then we would not have survived after the first mine.

But Bondarev almost did not hear his boss. As an overly proud and vindictive person, he was mortified by the familiar address to him "Mikhalych". He is a major, a senior officer, and let his boss observe military etiquette - that's what Alexei Mikhailovich was thinking now. And it doesn't matter that a few minutes ago he saved his life, he did not feel gratitude to his savior, now he was oppressed by one thing - he, a senior in rank, was called, like a village grandfather, "Mikhalych". He again walked behind Sazonov, and everything annoyed him: both the captain's hoarse tenor, and the thick muzzle of the messenger, who, it seemed to him, was hiding a smile of contempt for the unfired major. On the way they met with Kuleshov's

group; they were carrying someone on a cape. The lieutenant went up to Sazonov and began to report on what had happened, but Bondarev, with a squeal in his voice, choking with anger, almost shouted to him: "Set aside, comrade lieutenant, don't you know the regulations, why don't you ask permission from a senior in rank?" Sazonov looked at his deputy with curiosity and grunted in annoyance. The lieutenant, stomping on the spot, turning in the direction of Bondarev in the prescribed manner, but without turning his head, muttered in a hollow voice: "Comrade Major, allow me to turn to Captain Sazonov." Everything about the lieutenant said that he did not agree with the major's remark. And he wanted to make another remark for his bearing and about his violations in clothes, but, remembering his shame, he grumpily replied: "Contact me." Kuleshov reported that during the shelling, Lieutenant Cheremnykh, one of the interrogating officers, was killed. "Where did it hit him?" Sazonov asked. "A small splinter right here, behind the ear." The lieutenant turned away the edge of the raincoat: the face of the dead man with wide-open eyes expressed surprise and was so alive that Sazonov sincerely, from the heart, quickly, but with great sympathy, asked in his hoarse voice: "How did you manage to, junior lieutenant ...", and he, not deigning to answer the captain, looked with open eyes into the gray, snowy clouds, similar to poorly washed medical battalion underwear. "Comrade Captain," Kuleshov began in a pleading tone, "it's four kilometers to the regiment's location, you can see for yourself, the snow is deep, but there are only three of us, it will be hard to carry, maybe we'll bury here?" Sazonov figured - everything was right, and the snow was deep, and there were only

three, and nodded his head. The lieutenant breathed a sigh of relief and began to order. Then they all stood in silence in front of a small mound of fresh earth, and the messenger soldier Sazonov, with a sapper spatula, drove with curved edges into a hewn birch baluster an asterisk taken from the cap of the deceased, and carefully in block letters, under the dictation of another junior lieutenant, began to draw with an indelible pencil: "Here is buried ml. Lieutenant Cheremnykh A.F., who was killed on February 25, 1944. And after official, but iron words: "death to the fascist invaders", quite in a civil way - "farewell, Tolya, I will not forget you. Your friend ml. Lieutenant Dima Chuprin. Everyone understood that in the spring the grave would be washed away by melt water, settle, and then overgrow with large weeds, and the inscription on the fence would blur and disappear without a trace, just as this living young officer disappeared on this white snow. And no one will come to his grave, will not sit down on a comfortable bench, remembering the boy Tolik. Only his mother, still a young woman, will moan and weep inconsolably every time she takes out a military registration and enlistment office notice ... "Your son died heroically defending ..." and other official words printed in a huge circulation in the state printing

house. Dima Chuprin held in his hands a worn leatherette commander's bag, where his friend's documents were folded, two letters with a photograph of some girl with a bang, a penknife, a handkerchief. Chuprin held the TT pistol with a holster and waist belt under his arm. He was not rich, killed by his property, but there, in the company dugout, he left a dandy overcoat of real English khaki cloth, soft and thin to the touch, which he got in exchange for a trophy Omega watch from the head of the clothing service of the regiment. All the officers of the battalion went to look at Tolino's acquisition, and he, so happy, for the tenth time wearing a beautiful overcoat that was slightly wide at the waist, said: "Just get on the defensive, our Martemyanovich will sew my waist and there will be order in the tank units" . An overcoat of English cloth was an unattainable dream of almost every officer of the active army, but while officers of the headquarters, front, and army flaunted in them, they were a rarity in the division, and even in the regiments they only talked about them, attributing unprecedented qualities to overseas cloth - it does not wrinkle, and does not get dirty. All this was, of course, nonsense: dirt

it stuck equally to gray and English, but our gray had an advantage in that, thanks to its coarse wool, dirt was well brushed off, and the overcoat did not lose its shape even after rain. It was the secret of the tsar's manufactories, scolded in our time, multiplied by the exactingness of the army's rear service inspectors. But the English cloth was of a different color, pleasant and noble to look at. English masters worked on its shade for a long time, until a stable, pea-and-tobacco color was developed, approved even by the royal court.

Yesterday's accountants, supply managers, students, ^{rural} intelligentsia, and with them pre-war graduates of vocational schools who became officers, were also subject to fashion; an inexorable craving for the beautiful and the new blossomed as soon as the military fortune smiled confidently in the summer of forty-three and continued to smile in the fall ... Here the belated allied help arrived in time: somewhere along the gorges and mountains, starting from the Persian Gulf, through Iran, a thin, but the permanent thread is the road. If you look into the tarpaulin bodies of brand new Studebakers, Fords, Chevrolets, Dodges, there was everything from chocolate to tin ingots, nickels, anti-aircraft guns and much more that the insatiable front needed. Day and night, not knowing the rest, the drivers drove along the passes to the Azerbaijani Julfa, where the green caps of our border guards were already looming. Yes, it was help, but for such a multimillion-strong, omnivorous army that devoured everything that man created, this was very little. But without it, it would be even worse!

On the way to the headquarters of the division, almost everyone was silent, and only those in front - a big-faced messenger and another soldier - were talking about something and laughing nonchalantly, not looking back at the officers walking behind. Bondarev sniffed gloomily and kept reliving his shame, and it seemed to him that the soldiers walking in front were talking only about how he had celebrated the coward. And, having come to his dugout, Bondarev immediately reprimanded his liaison, a very elderly soldier, for smoking in his compartment, and Sazonov for a long time still heard his clucking behind two partitions. The dugout of the Special Department was built with skill and taking into account the specifics of the work; one common and two spare entrances and

a case when specially verified agents came to the captain for instructions and would not encounter other visitors when they left.

Sazonov also had a squad of soldiers at his disposal, who, according to a long tradition, were selected for service from various parts of the division. They were mostly young, healthy guys, after intensive checks with inquiries at the place of residence and study of behavior and reliability through informants, which took several months. As a result, many of them were weeded out: some had close relatives repressed, while others received information about dishonesty, negligence in service, and quarrelsomeness. These also disappeared. It was difficult, but honorable, to serve in the Smersh security department; the soldiers assumed mystery and importance! They didn't invite former friends from their companies to visit, they didn't go to anyone themselves, they kept their dugout not far from the commander's dugout and carried out guard duty, guarding the separate dugout at night, where their chief, his deputy and the office of the department were located, where he commanded not according to years of strict and silent sergeant Kalmykov. He was in charge of the correspondence of the entire department, kept a record of outgoing, incoming, kept under control the execution of various requests, sent mail on the appointed days and pounded on a typewriter all day long.

Sazonov, having taken office, did not think that there were so many papers in his household. His head was spinning when he got acquainted with the paperwork. It was scary that all the papers sent and received were stamped "owls. secret." It was here that Lepin, the chief of staff of the division, came to the rescue: he offered him to take Sergeant Kalmykov to the post of secretary of the department. The captain at first doubted whether Kalmykov would be able to cope with the office, but after he completed an internship in a special department of a neighboring division, Sazonov had no doubts. A dozen days later, all secretarial accounts were already working and Sazonov was already calm about his papers and office.

The laconic, always taut sergeant was a pedant in his work and treated everyone politely, but he was persistent in fulfilling the deadlines for correspondence, exacting in the execution of papers and other reporting, which, despite front-line conditions, pursued the Smershev service. The punitive machine sent

from above orders, orders, directives, instructions, demanding their proper implementation, while simultaneously monitoring their implementation. All this paper carousel captured the lower classes in its arms, held it securely and twisted its rules of the game to fulfill the main tasks - to hear everything, know about everything and mercilessly punish without warning, so that it would be discourteous to others!

Sergeant Kalmykov in a short time, with some inner instinct, guessed the main flows in his office. Instead of one record of incoming documents from higher authorities, he made three, depending on the deadlines for execution, started several records on the implementation of instructions within the department, built a small file cabinet to record the work of agents and promising informants involved in the verification and development of persons suspected of hostile actions. For days on end he leafed through orders, orders, made extracts from them, then typed them on a typewriter. And so the day before, he restored and started registering papers that disappeared along with the bodies of the employees of the Special Department and their very quiet secretary Zina in a huge funnel from the German "five hundred". Yes, and there were few remains then: a few damp with the remains of flesh, slightly smoked by an explosion of bones, a mangled safe door - that, perhaps, is all that remains of the divisional Smersh. The newly minted chief was pleased with the sergeant, seeing with what meticulousness he conducted the affairs of his department.

Chapter III.

INFORMATION TECHNIQUE

And now, at the captain's entrance, Sergeant Kalmykov quickly got up and, in accordance with the regulations, clearly reported that no orders had been received from the authorities, and at 18.00 - a meeting of the chiefs of services with the division commander. And then Sazonov remembered that at this meeting he would represent Bondarev as his deputy, and grimaced at the memories of how he behaved during the first twenty days of joint service - and about today's case when the major "pulled" Kuleshov; in the "Smershev" service, strictly statutory appeals between officers were not accepted, and bare martinetism did not take root among them.

As a man with a simple, without any fuss complaisant character and a practical mind, Sazonov felt that his deputy wanted to put himself above him, setting out individual common truths in an instructive tone and with such an air that only he was allegedly privy to the secret why the allies are still do not open a second front, and why the Finns are inclined to a truce, and how Hitler will react to these events. And he, silently listening to these primitive arguments, seemed to agree with Bondarev, and he, entering the role of a full-time propagandist, smugly, with a sense of superiority over his boss in matters of big politics, began to argue that the captain could now always rely on him, and that almost the corps commander himself reckoned with his political knowledge, and that after a lecture he had given, the corps commander always invited him to tea. Trusting by nature, not initiated into the corps political department, Sazonov took these tales as pure truth, and his deputy, encouraged by the silent attention of his superior, wove him. various tales about combat friends-front-line soldiers, officers who doted on him, everyone was looking for his friendship, and his boss, Colonel Khramtsov, cried on his shoulder when the corps was disbanded, and talked about how lucky he was that Alexei Mikhailovich served him, and that he will always be proud of it.

If Dmitry Vasilievich knew that Bondarev never gave lectures at the headquarters of the corps and the corps commander never invited him to tea, that he was just an instructor in the political department, was engaged in reporting on party work in parts of divisions, settled questions of instructions for admission to the party, checked the received information, prepared reporting data for Colonel Khramtsov, whom he despised with all his being and had already twice anonymously reported to the political department of the front about the systematic drinking organized by the deputy commander and his chief under the guise of checking the combat readiness of divisions and individual units that were part of the corps! No, Sazonov had no idea about this, but he felt that Bondarev, who had no special practice, wanted to impose himself on him in the role of an uncle-mentor on political issues. "Well, to hell with him, let him talk, as long as he doesn't interfere in operational affairs," Captain Sazonov finished thinking about his deputy. Two hours later,

both of them, in the advancing darkness, left the dugout and, breathing in the fresh pre-spring air of the blue twilight, went along the beaten road to the headquarters of the division. Both were silent. Dmitry Vasilyevich was thinking about the upcoming inspection of his department by representatives of the Special Department of the Army. He did not know who would come, but, judging by the content of the correspondence and individual claims, he was sure that the inspectors, as always, would dig into general issues: the weakening of intelligence and operational work in the entrusted parts of the division, poor verification of primary materials coming from secret informants, insufficient disclosure of the facts of undermining the

combat capability in the units of the division. Yesterday's regimental special officer with no experience in the division, he mentally prepared himself for the verification exam and reassured himself: if they were removed, they would not give less regiment for service, if only they would get a major

Bondarev, a little behind, followed his boss and was immersed in his own thoughts. Here he is - a major and is under the command of a captain, politically illiterate, and long before the war, Bondarev was already at a responsible job in the regional executive committee and communicated with people that this "captain" could not even think of! He remembered how the last party mobilization

in the spring of forty-two, she shook out a significant part of the party and Soviet apparatuses from cozy and warm corners, and as the deputy chairman of the regional executive committee, Ivanushkin, speaking to the mobilized party members, spoke through a false voice that he envied his comrades leaving for the front to strengthen the political and party cadres of our valiant Red Army, and urged them not to spare their lives to defend the cause of Lenin-Stalin! And now he, envious of Ivanushkin, mentally released a tirade addressed to him: well, don't you

guess, only a year older, and now he probably sleeps with his fool in warmth and will never know how Alexei Mikhailovich almost lost his life today. And remembering the mortar shelling and his shame, he looked hostilely at Sazonov's back and again began to list his shortcomings in his mind. He addresses everyone simply, without a commanding tone. Here, for example, to the same Kalmykov. Well, what did he find in him to talk with him for a whole hour, because a simple clerk would give him a command and let him do it, and he drinks tea with him, talks for hours and turns to his familiar: you, says Sasha, don't forget to send a request to Sverdlovsk. Is that what they say with subordinates, and even with a sergeant! He remembered how Sazonov spoke with this, like him, lieutenant Kuleshov: "... you come on, Seryozha, check

signal".

Bondarev, although he was not a regular military man, but being in a circle of people of different ranks, he realized that strict treatment of juniors in rank according to the charter is accepted by high authorities as exactingness, discipline, as integral qualities of any army commander and political worker. Familiarity was condemned by the authorities, and as a senior officer, terribly proud of his rank, at his first acquaintance with Sazonov, he said that he had received this rank ahead of schedule for the fulfillment of some important assignment, but, lacking imagination, did not begin to spread which one, referring to the strict secrecy of this assignment, and almost in a whisper added: "... only the commander, but at the army headquarters they know about it ..." He himself did not know why he was assigned a major after recertification for new officer ranks in March forty-third, with the introduction of shoulder straps. In that fuss and leapfrog with new titles, many lost, while others, on the contrary, undeservedly jumped over

step of their ranks. He was first certified for the position of political officer of the regiment for party work, which was not higher than the rank of captain, but at that time the reserve corps of the SVGK[4] was formed⁴, ^{And} he was appointed to the position of senior instructor of the corps political department for organizational work and received a major. With a sense of superiority, he compared his successes in the service with the party mobilized countrymen sent at the disposal of the same army, and it seemed to him that only he, one of all, was worthy of this high rank, and did not realize that Colonel Khramtsov, to whom he sent anonymous letters, was involved in his promotion. Fedor Ivanovich at that time was personally involved in the formation of his political department. Having received the lists and reviews of candidates for positions and the staffing table for the department, he reasoned as follows: what kind of department head would I be if I had only two majors under my command, not counting the deputy lieutenant colonel. No, he decided, and according to the states he sent for re-certification for two more captains and was satisfied with the staffing - now the department looked more solid. And he chose the candidates for majors in the old clerk's way: four identical pieces of paper with the names of the candidates folded into tubes and thrown into a hat, and with the deputy they pulled out two each. Colonel Khramtsov was an old soldier and a fatalist at heart; I believed that you can't drive around fate on a lame mare! So fate gave him a subordinate in the person of Bondarev.

For a long time he could not believe that the denunciations, as allegedly established, were sent from his inner circle. And since then, he began to look at his subordinates more carefully. In an effort to find the scammer, he examined for the hundredth time the anonymous text sent to him, written in half-printed handwritten letters and cursive, and unexpectedly drew attention to two letters in the text. Where this cowardly hand with a vile soul, as Fyodor Ivanovich believed, printed the text, the letter "d" was executed in cursive as the letter "b", but with an upper squiggle to the left side and with capital letters "w" and "t" . The same hand emphasized them from above or below. So, having never studied the craft of identifying a person by handwriting, he unexpectedly found stable signs in the handwriting of an anonymous person and

began to read the handwritten materials of his employees more carefully, comparing them with the original denunciation.

Bondarev was summed up by the conditions of the active army - it was not possible to remain alone either in the political department or in a hastily knocked together cold shed with bunk beds. Therefore, he wrote his denunciation in a hurry, fearing that someone would accidentally cover him red-handed. I had to write in fits and starts, switching from block letters to cursive, and it was dangerous to rewrite the text. If someone, the Holy Spirit or the devil, asked the new major why he was writing, he would make excuses that he wanted to eradicate vice, warn his superiors that this could end badly and that this signal would help his boss get rid of vice. But even at the Last Judgment, he would not admit that he cherished the thought, and suddenly the signal would be "taken" - then Colonel Khramtsov vacates his post, his deputy takes his place, and he, Bondarev, becomes the deputy head of the political department, and this thought warmed him at night in a cold shed and woke him up in the morning with the joy of possible changes in his life. Of course, he did not take into account those other three - also majors, he chose himself for promotion because he considered himself more worthy than them. And according to the practice of past denunciations, he hoped that the results of the consideration would definitely be and the authorities would not leave it like that, and closing his eyes, he saw himself already a lieutenant colonel, and then ... He almost did not remember his mistake with Romanov, whose trace was lost somewhere in the distance From him. Once Aleksey Mikhailovich met this surname in political department correspondence with the position of a member of the military council and the rank of lieutenant general of one of the armies of the Kalinin Front, but he thought that there were few namesakes. He did not expect that he would become a general. So they walked in the twilight of a February night along a rolling road winding among the trees, and, crossing a strip of light forest, there was a loud, haunting voice: "Stop, whoever is coming, stop, I will shoot!" And an unexpected shot, a bullet circled over their heads, Bondarev poked his way into the side of the road, and Sazonov covered the shooter with a fence mat, but he fired again without warning, and again the frightened voice shouted: "Get down, otherwise I'll shoot ..." Dmitry Vasilyevich, already lying, began to cry out

negotiations, but the one standing in the woods continued to shoot. Then there was silence. They were lying on the side of the road, and the captain shouted in his hoarse tenor that he was demanding the elder, but he no longer dared to get up, risking a bullet. Time passed languidly, but voices were heard ahead: "Well, why did you open fire ..." - another frightened one, justifying himself in a sonorous voice: "I shout "stop", and they are coming at me, but I, Comrade Sergeant, can't see well from the chicken blindness, so he began to shoot ..." Then they got up, approached, and Bondarev gave vent to his indignation at this fear and fright from an unexpected shot, helpless lying in the snow, almost with a squeal in his voice demanded to give the name of their chief and the immediate punishment of the patrolman, everything repeating that he will not leave this without consequences! The sergeant silently listened to the major's scolding, and then, in a guilty voice, he began to justify that the young ones, from the unfired replenishment, had been assigned to the double patrol. The partner, as a senior, went to the company for grubs, but this one, what to take from him: he was trembling like an aspen leaf, and besides, night blindness had fallen on him, so he began to shoot out of fear. "Say thanks that I gave him a rifle, and not a machine gun, then there could be misfortune." Sazonov had already cooled down with anger and advised the sergeant to select healthy soldiers in the outfit. The sergeant agreed with him, but with doubt in his voice said: "But where can I get them, healthy ones?! They send young people to us, and they are through one dystrophic - in the rear, the people are completely emaciated ..." - and fell their families and their difficult life.

Bondarev again tried to chastise the sergeant, but the captain quickly began: "Well, Major, stop fuming, see, everything went well?!" But then his deputy almost choked with indignation: "How dare you, captain, tell me, the major, how to behave, we must not forget - in our army there are charters and instructions; and you must keep the chain of command. Or is it not followed in your department? Now you did not demand to punish the patrolman, but tomorrow he will lay the colonel in the snow. "And then even a general," Sazonov added quickly, and, maintaining a mocking tone, continued, "well, then a marshal, and then ..." "And then, well, say who is behind the marshal, Supreme, right? - soared, splashing saliva, Bondarev. "Is that what you wanted to say?" - "It is you

You said it yourself, Comrade Major, and don't take me at my word. And do not forget that although you are a major, I am your boss, and stop trumping that you are a major, it is already starting to bother me ... "he added with firmness in his voice and walked ahead of Bondarev with a decisive step. He did not expect such a decisive tone and remained standing with his mouth open, wanting to object, but changed his mind and, muttering something to himself, moved after him.

Chapter IV. DIVISIONAL MEETING

The meeting of the chiefs of the division's services was held in a large headquarters tent with an iron barrel converted into a stove. Officers of different ranks and ages gathered here: here is a small, frail-looking, but with a loud voice - the deputy for the rear of the division, Lieutenant Colonel Budylev, in the distant past, a participant in the civil war; tall and stately - the head of communications, Major Grankin; next to him, as always, was the communications battalion commander Kuzmin, and there, in the depths, around the stove, officers of the rear service, chemical protection, sapper-engineering, artillery and various other services - Sazonov did not know them personally, but he had heard about many of them from information and agency messages. Most of them did not even know that their names, meetings at rare feasts, misses in the service and free-style conversations settled in the Special Department, an unsleeping eye, or rather, whose long ears, established at the birth of power and washed with the blood of the Great Terror in the middle In the 1930s, with the help of secret information, the atmosphere of voluntary apprenticeship, people tried to find out everything and about

everything. Dmitry Vasilyevich did not hesitate when they demanded more and more information from him, identifying persons who sought directly or indirectly to undermine the combat capability of units and divisions of the division. He believed that this installation, received from above, was correct, but that was until the time when his life and work presented him with many unresolved questions.

Being already the head of an independent body of military counterintelligence, he was convinced that, in fulfilling the order to collect information among the personnel, he could not avoid mistakes in their assessment. The more information there was, the more difficult and longer was the way of its verification for reliability

and objectivity. Many tricks awaited the special officer when collecting and evaluating information coming from secret information. Often there were cases when secret information turned out to be deliberately false,

sometimes selfishly interested or erroneous, and then try to immediately separate the truth from rumors and gossip.

The worst thing was when a person who wanted to use the omnipotence of counterintelligence for his own purposes penetrated the intelligence network; offered his services, seeking to drown someone, slander or take revenge, harm someone, doing it out of envy, in selfish interests, from unreasonable harmfulness to all neighbors, disgust, heartlessness and disbelief in goodness.

Awareness in the units of the division was formed according to the principle "the more, the better." The special officer of the regiment could not physically cope with the existing number of agents and informants. Therefore, residencies were created in battalions and companies, and a foreman or sergeant was selected for the role of a resident - strong-willed, energetic people with life experience and the ability to make information communicate everything that interested the counterintelligence officer. And what were the

sources of information in the trench conditions of the army in the field? According to the instructions of the Special Departments, every secret employee had to be able to write his messages - this was the established rule. It doesn't matter that the informant did not use a pen, but if he was observant, had the gift of "talking" the interlocutor and at the same time extracting information of interest to counterintelligence, then in such cases the operative himself or his resident associate, according to the words of an unspoken employee, wrote a message on behalf of a third party .

Comprehensive information tired the special officers, swelled letters filed against battalions, regiments and separate parts of the division; the hand sometimes did not rise to receive reports of the theft of towels, soap, abuse of foremen, platoon commanders, theft and petty cheating in company kitchens, and much more, which belittled the main purpose of the special officers - the fight against spies! But whether they were in the active army - no one ever spoke about this, and Sazonov, in his entire service in the department, never heard of the exposure of spies in the army, and not a single orientation of the Main Directorate of their service told about this. But there were a lot of reports about the capture in the front line and even in the deep rear of abandoned German agents. Reading stingy orders

the main "Smershevo" headquarters, Dmitry Vasilyevich and his colleagues at work could only guess what opportunities the fascist Abwehr [5] and other security services had in terms of acquiring scouts - huge camps of Soviet prisoners of war, exhausted by hunger, where this gray, mostly peasant, the masses were ready to do anything for an extra ration of bread: to become a spy, a saboteur, a devil, a devil, if only they could eat their fill! Who among them thought about the fact that he violated the oath, betrayed the Motherland, became a traitor, an enemy of his country - he was tormented by hunger, he swelled up, suffered from scurvy, suffered bullying from the guards. He saw how day after day the flesh of the body disappeared, and with it the soul melted from the hopeless existence. Hunger occupied all thoughts! He was the main tormentor; he embraced his whole being - both flesh and blood, and mind, and daily, hourly repeated: I want to eat, I want to eat! The strong in spirit kept calm, went into the memory of the past, steadfastly accepted the horror of camp life. Well, for those who were weaker and thought only about food, they felt bad. For an extra portion of gruel - at least to hell in the teeth, just at least once to eat your fill.

These are the two Sazonov remembered then, back on the Kalinin front. They were intercepted by military guards when they crossed the front line in the morning. From the stories of eyewitnesses, it was clear that they, not very hiding, directly went to our

positions. A tall soldier from the commandant's platoon in black windings, guarding these two, announced to Sazonov in a loud joyful voice: "Comrade lieutenant of state security, you see, the Nazi spies have been caught ..."

Dmitry Vasilyevich saw how they shuddered anxiously, raising their heads, looking at the one approaching them commander. One of them, with a long nose, began in a guilty voice: "Yes, what kind of spies we are, we are prisoners of war, only trouble happened to us, we wanted to leave the camp - so Petyanya and I went to the Germans. Yes, if we were spies, would we go across the front in broad daylight?!" - and fell silent, doomedly dropping his head on his knees covered with hands.

By evening, both spies were interrogated separately. From their testimonies, it was established that both, unable to withstand the camp regime, voluntarily signed up for a recruiter (in his words, for "difficult" work) and were taken out of the camp. Then ten days they were taught

collection of military information, they promised after completing the task for three thousand occupation marks, new uniforms and government food. After that, they signed a leaflet, which stated: in case of failure to fulfill the task and go over to the side of the Bolshevik regime, they would be shot during detention. They easily agreed with this, and, while still at the forefront of the Germans, before crossing the front, they agreed among themselves that as soon as they crossed the front, they would immediately surrender to the authorities and tell everything. Sazonov spent two days in interrogations. The arrested, as if in spirit, told about everything that was happening in the Myachkovsky camp on the territory of the neighboring region and spoke in detail about their forced betrayal, about the tasks they received, told all the names of the Germans known to them, who taught them the simple craft of collecting information in the frontline zone, and more there is a lot of other information about this Abwehr farm, where, like pancakes, agents were baked from our prisoners of war,

throwing them in dozens across the front. Dmitry Vasilievich got used to them in a few days, and being a naturally benevolent person, he sympathized with them, pitying them. He understood that they were spies only in form: both from there, from the Germans, both voluntarily signed up for the service, learned to spy and ate enemy bread. But, in essence, what the hell were they spies if they immediately agreed to surrender and hoped that they would be pardoned if they obeyed everything. Both were crying, remembering how much they had dashed there, from the Germans, they asked for weapons and sent to the front line. Had it been his will, he would have

They were shot a day later, and, as the commander of the commandant's company, senior lieutenant Zhulko, who usually carried out the sentence, told him, they behaved quietly and submissively before being shot, and only that long-nosed, older man consoled his partner: "Hz, whine, you see, what they are, they are all smeared with one world: both fascists and communists - no pity for the common man - slap and period. And so ended the unlucky life of two simple, illiterate guys on that gray autumn day. "You understand, comrade Sazonov," Zhulko said indignantly,

"what an enemy, he compared us with the Nazis, but for that I would have shot him again!" Back in the past, Sazonov fed

dislike for Zhulko after a report received from an informer from his company. Once, over a drink, the main executor of the tribunal's sentences complained that others were given awards, but he was doing hard work, had been fighting since the very beginning of the war, and had already carried out more than a hundred death sentences during this time - and not a single escape! And now, looking at Zhulko sitting in front of him with a black shiny back of his head and drooping broad shoulders, Dmitry Vasilyevich thought: "You won't escape from this" - and mentally imagined everyone whom Zhulko had shot; in front of him stood a company of its full complement - old and young, and Russians, and Tatars, and Azerbaijanis, and Ukrainians and many others who fell into the millstones of war, chickened out in the offensive, deserted from the unit from despair and fear, clumsily shooting at themselves, chopping fingers and doing more to escape the front and get back home. But it wasn't there - the division's tribunal worked like a well-oiled machine gun: it rained bursts of merciless sentences, with a simple but reliable, like the bolt of a Mosin rifle of the 1896/31 model, a consequence, without any legally required protection and competition in the judicial trial, and, like nails in a coffin, "The verdict is final and not subject to appeal!.." was the crown of a speedy trial of a lonely, helpless, self-confident man! And then all of them, shaking from the unknown and fear or dumbfounded by what had happened, the soldiers from the commandant's company, having tied their hands with wire, were led to execution, and Zhulko, who had not yet been awarded for his "work", was already shouting after the victims who were dead from fear: "For the traitors to the

Motherland ... cry! Sazonov knew all this in detail: both the investigation, and the merciless tribunal, and his speedy trial, but in his heart he still did not agree with the execution of those two - they did not pull on spies and saboteurs. However, when he called Captain Guskov, the former head of the Special Department of the division, and hinted at a request for a commutation of the sentence, he covered him with such sophisticated obscenities, which he usually used when he was very excited and displeased. And only later, in the case file, did he find a copy of a special message to the Special Department of the Army, where Guskov, skillfully bypassing sharp corners, presented this story in a different way: "I report that when crossing the front line in the sector of the 20th

Nazi agents recruited from among our prisoners of war. As a result of skillfully carried out operational investigative measures, the arrested were exposed as belonging to the Abwehr department in the city of Myachkovo, where they were recruited and completed a course in military tactical intelligence to collect information about the units of the Soviet army in the front line. After completing the task, they were assigned a site for the reverse transition and a password for communication, and also promised a significant amount of money ... ". The case materials were transferred to the Military Tribunal of the 20th Infantry Division. ("The information received about the Myachkovo spy

sabotage school was sent to you under No. ... dated ... October 1942.") Only one printed sheet contained the story of two former soldiers of the Red Army, it is not yet known whose fault they were captured by the enemy, who repented of their act and hoped for the indulgence of their own, native flesh from flesh, worker-peasant army, but without waiting for it, they were laid in the cold autumn ground, and not a cross, not an asterisk, not a peg, and not even a mound, only flat, plowed land above, and more

Nothing.

From others in the department, Sazonov heard that Guskov had been a master of "fake" cases since the thirties, and, after reading the special report, he was convinced that his boss had cleverly played up the circumstances of the detention of two "spies" and passed it off as the result of the work of the department he led. Although, in all honesty, Dmitry Vasilyevich did not expect such a denouement, because in fact those two voluntarily surrendered and told everything without concealment! They deserve punishment, but not death! Send them to the penalty area, to the "front", otherwise immediately - to the wall! Resentment, impotence and a sense of his own guilt for those two who trusted him seized his memory, and he almost did not hear the course of the meeting and was all in the past. Somewhere in the depths of the soul, probably from the ancestors who lived on the ancient land of Tver for hundreds of years, God-fearing, mild-mannered, hard-working, a flair for truth and justice has been preserved. It made itself felt, despite the propaganda of ruthlessness towards enemies, the glorification of cruelty towards them as a healthy start. Even at the beginning of the war, when the newspapers instead of the usual "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" appeared

"Death to the German occupiers!", he repeatedly recalled how the same newspapers were clamoring about proletarian solidarity, the forced mobilization of yesterday's workers and peasants in Germany, about their inevitable discontent, growing into a revolution; overthrow of the fascist regime. And suddenly this harsh slogan sobered up many at once - it means that there is nothing to pin on the conscious, highly cultured German working class, it means that they are now all occupiers and death to all of them, and even to those who were forcibly mobilized by Hitler! Somehow, all this did not fit in with the previous arguments: class consciousness, solidarity of the common interests of the working people and other pink fog, which dispersed like the smoke of a soldier's fire, leaving no hope that fascism would be destroyed by its proletariat. But, despite the enormous pressure of universal universal mercilessness towards the fascist invaders, Sazonov could not believe that all Germans were fascists, and somewhere in the depths of his soul he still believed in the romantic impulse of universal class consciousness.

The daily, hourly ideological press, the general mood of colleagues who passed the test filter, did not touch his spiritual strings - to sympathize with everyone who was in a hopeless, helpless state, all the weak and those who had nothing to hope for! This feeling interfered with his

service, and Guskov, his former boss - a cynic and swearing, told him more than once: "Why pity them, let them pity themselves. And you, Sazonov, with such pity should not serve in our "Chekushka", but somewhere with babies ... Although, that's right, you came to the authorities from school, and maybe your slobbering was needed there, but here we have no mercy... In a word, the proletarian sword. Do you understand?!" Guskov despised everyone:

his bosses - because they were his bosses, and he was not above them; his subordinates - for the fact that they, as he believed, were all idlers, loafers and incompetent; He despised Sazonov for his higher pedagogical education, the lack of Chekist acumen and rigidity in investigating cases. He often turned to him: "student", "teacher", putting into these words all his disregard not only for the essence of the word, but also for Dmitry Vasilyevich himself for his competent speech and ability

reason logically. Once, being in a good mood, he told a KGB story: "Here, you see, a telegraph pole in

the yard. So, you have to start undercover development on him and properly, in a Chekist way, justify it so that it is prompt, competent, - and, lighting a cigarette, looked at Sazonov with a sense of superiority: - Well, why are you silent, teacher, there is nothing to say to you? That means you still lack our ingenuity. Learn from your elders! Look, I'll justify everything to you chin-chin! Firstly, you see, he stands alone, a torn bitch, which means that he shuns people, the team, which means that he is on his own mind and behaves cautiously - suspiciously! Usek? Listen further. This suspicious type, if he avoids everyone, means that he does not trust anyone and is afraid that he is being followed, and he does not let anyone near him. And now you come closer to him and immediately hear - buzzing. Well, if it's buzzing, it's already a complete enemy! No, that's not all. There, you see, and his cups are down - that means he doesn't drink, he doesn't want, you bastard, to accidentally show his hostile mood for his entourage when he's drunk ... And yet, look: you see, he has a support, he is called a stepson by signalmen. And that means he has already started recruiting accomplices!" - and, pleased with his superiority, he puffed on a cigarette and said: - You see, I justified everything for you with primary education, as it should be, and tomorrow you can already arrest him! And here you are with the higher, sitting mekal, bekal and did not know where to start! This means that in our business, practice, one might say, is more than education ... Well, what did it give you? Well, you dusted your brains with education, you began to talk to these snotty boys about your flickers, but life, it consists of practice ... "

But here Dmitry Vasilyevich, having decided to stand up for education, confidently began:

"Well, how then did Vladimir Ilyich say that you need to study, study and ..." "Yes, yes,

that's right," Guskov agreed, "but in our KGB case We have to work, and then learn later, when all the enemies are jailed, and you know, there are still a lot of them! Here in Ulyanovsk we didn't leave our offices for days - we worked hard. Without days off, without various expenses, they only knew arrests and interrogations, and again arrests, and then it turned out that Yezhov was a bitch and an enemy of the people! And I believed him, and then

the commissions came in large numbers, found violations of social law, I barely got away, they turned me to the bottom, to the operative department of the Omsk camp administration, but my friend, state security sergeant Kadrin, did not save himself and was taken to court along with the entire leadership of the region as enemies of the people ... - and added gloomily: - They let them go into consumption, none of them got out. In the same place, in the control basement: hands with wire, then a head in a tarpaulin and a hole in the back of the head. It was already in 1939 when Lavrenty Pavlovich came to the NKVD," he added with a mixed feeling of resentment and humility.

Sazonov Guskov, his first boss, will often remember, rest his bones Smolensk land. No, he did not take over from him the fierce anger of the watchdog and the indefatigable passion to punish and punish! His boss almost did not see and did not notice purity and kindness in those around him. He despised everyone and trusted no one. His stories often began with the phrase: "Here was my boss Vlasov, well, I'll tell you, incredible bastard ..." Sometimes he changed epithets, but he left the essence of the characteristics of his colleagues in the same unchanged framework. So, recalling the service in the Mariinsky camps, he could start with the phrase: "Nikolai Ivanovich is my colleague, well, he was a scoundrel, he borrowed ten from me in front of the Finnish one, he never gave it back ..." Guskov never remembered either his parents or family living somewhere near Omsk. In the service, Guskov was also intolerant - he suspected that everyone was deceiving him, he was suspicious of the good deeds towards him from those around him, and he took any disinterested manifestation of attention for some kind of trick, undermining his career! Even outwardly, he did not arouse sympathy: thin and bony, he did not speak, but cut abruptly in short phrases, as if he were taking out evil and contempt for his life and difficult service. Having not read a single book, he did not hide this and said: "I fall asleep from the first line and therefore I cannot read, and in general - this is an empty business!" He organically did not endure the preparation of reports, documents and adapted his deputy for this - quiet and silent, whom he chose from among the detectives of his saddle at the beginning of the formation of the division. Sazonov was disgusted by everything that was in Guskov, and as a teacher

he felt his nature, doomed to an incorrigible existence. And even with some relief, he accepted the news of his death.

The ensuing silence interrupted his memories of the past; the meeting started. The divisional commander, Colonel Bogunets, who started the war as a captain, briefly and clearly outlined the division's combat mission with a slight southern "hack": to hold the line until further

notice. By tradition, Dmitry Vasilyevich was the last to speak. And out of school habit, he took a break to establish silence, but this was not required: his name and position always aroused burning curiosity and subconscious fear among those around him. Introducing Bondarev in a calm tone, he continued his message in unison with those who spoke about the combat readiness of the personnel of the division's services in defense, the increased demands on discipline, guard duty, and, lowering his voice, announced as something the main thing that the enemy had put his elite units in front of us and (hereinafter referred to as the teacher's tone), "as established by our intelligence, the enemy is actively studying our front line to penetrate our rear with reconnaissance and sabotage purposes."

To be honest, Sazonov exaggerated the plans of the enemy. But, as has long been customary in his special service, he had to clothe his information in a veil of mystery and secrecy, referring to documentary data from off-front sources and intelligence reports from the partisan center. Although he did not have either one or the other for a long time. He was accustomed to this lie from the first days of his service, and he walked along the beaten track, convincing himself that by doing this he did not harm anyone, but benefited greatly, especially in terms of increasing the vigilance of the officers of the division, which will be noted in the report of the head of the political department, lieutenant colonel Markin, who is sitting here, next to the divisional commander. But everyone expected a little bloodletting when Sazonov proceeded to enumerate examples of slovenliness, lack of exactingness and diligence in parts of the division's services. Many of those sitting fidgeted on the benches, thinking about petty sins, shortcomings with the personnel. The artillery supply captain Fedorov, depicting a frightened face and moving his head from side to side, whispered: "... let us remember Tsar David and all his meekness! facts" collected by awareness. But there was an iron party principle -

"if there is at least five percent of the truth, it must be spoken loudly," and it does not matter that ninety-five is the fiction of the informant, no one was interested in the fact that honor and dignity were humiliated by this lie, and those who were easily vulnerable, who received an undeserved insult in public, she did not pass for a long time, tormented them. Everyone knew that it was not accepted anywhere to complain about special officers, and even in the minds of none of the officers this arose. None of them will require an objective investigation and no one will exact for falsehood, direct slander, and will not require the satisfaction of honor. All this is left in the past, despised, the old world! In the new, people's army immediately abandoned the concept of honor and, of course, satisfaction, considering this the prejudices of the blue blood hated by the pro-

Perhaps these are indeed prejudices that have already been almost forgotten. About them, desecrated, no one here remembered, except as the chief of staff of the division, Colonel Lepin; a former graduate of the Moscow cadet Michelson school, which is at the Pokrovsky Gates, who miraculously survived in the German, civil and in that deadly whirlwind that swept through the country from the beginning of the thirties - he remembered that the honor of an officer at one time was like a bride in white: touchy, without single speck; she was like that for many of his fellow soldiers - regular officers of the Russian imperial army. She was a guiding star in the army environment for many: smart and stupid, rich and poor - and her scolding, insult then meant more to them than death. All army rituals, from unit formation to solemn parades, were a well-thought-out system of military education - they sanctified, affirmed, strengthened the military unit, pride in their service, their regiment, their company, and all this, taken together, was his personal honor. He remembered the assembly hall of the school: columns, pilasters, battle paintings in the piers and next to the double-headed eagle in gold letters for future officers from Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich, head of educational institutions of the Russian army: "Remember, your wealth is honor and dignity."

As a pupil of the cadet corps, he knew from the age of ten what military service is. A graduate of the thirteenth, last peaceful year, he was in love with his service, never weary of it, and sadly recalled his cadet youth. He was always lucky to have bosses.

He remembered them all, starting with the first one, the battalion commander. None of them ever humiliated him with abuse, but he also fixed in himself the core of respect for his subordinates. Yes, he was demanding and, as a staff officer, picky about trifles, but he never stooped to shouting and cursing. A calm, restrained, but at the same time exacting tone, without humiliating swearing on the square, had an effect on many people much stronger and deeper, leaving in them an invisible trace of some kind of positive sincerity that reminded them of something high, pure, inaccessible, perhaps received in the family / school, in everyday life with people who have retained a spark of kindness and respect. This charge was carried by Lepin. From him, always taut, with a good bearing, came some kind of strength of reliability, decency, justice and trust! He imperceptibly softened the temper of the third divisional commander, raised and strengthened his restraint by h

The staff officers of the regiments of the division frankly copied Lepin. People like him are educated, honest, they agreed to serve the Bolsheviks for various reasons: some under duress, others voluntarily, but all of them en masse recognized the new government, and they, professionals, had no disagreements with her, she needed them, but a feeling of some incomprehensible guilt before her and alienation in front of other painters - people who came from the people, yesterday's soldiers, non-commissioned officers, always hovered over them. These, due to the newly instilled class consciousness, quietly hated the "white bone" out of envy, because they were educated and showed their former officers a mile away with their bearing.

The civil war continued in those class battles glorified by the piites and was skillfully directed by commissars of all ranks towards intransigence, hostility, leaving no stone unturned from the past existence. Everything of the old regime was eradicated, history was rewritten, and its victors, with the superiority of their proletarian contempt for the defeated system and its former representatives, looked at them as if they were unnecessary trash, and openly despised them. Many mid-level combatant military experts, surrounded by the almost open hostility of the new painters with their studies at open party meetings, petty intrigues, sidelong glances at their past, gradually survived from the army and left with annoyance and bitterness, hard parting with their profession, which has now become

suddenly unnecessary for the new government. Ah, if only the ill will towards them - the "former". The worst has begun! Somewhere out there, on the inaccessible top of the party, five or six people, without suffering from fits of conscience, decided that in building socialism "in a single country" under capitalist encirclement, the dictatorship of the proletariat should be the first to strike at the socially dangerous elements where it was enlisted, basically, the entire literate category of people of old Russia, starting from members of the opposing parties of all shades - from Meks[6] to anarchists, from policemen to prison officers, court officials, prosecutors of the tsarist time. The gentlemen officers were not forgotten either. So in January 1930, a circular of the OGPU appeared, which ordered to take under supervision, and in some cases into active undercover development of all persons representing a social danger; at the slightest sign of counter-revolutionary activity, arrest them immediately and organize trials over them through the "troikas" that successfully joined the first waves of terror. None of the former officers could have imagined and would not believe now that if he was an officer in the past, honestly and conscientiously bore hardships and hardships, risked his life in the German, and then in the civilian, now, according to the OGPU closed directive, he will be declared an enemy of the people, and local authorities will give a command: at the slightest show of resistance or an attempt to escape, use weapons without warning. How many among them were selflessly brave, courageous, despising death, walking ahead of the soldiers in the bayonet. Yes, yes, they were officers of the Russian army, and now, when in the past, front-line comfrey soldiers were pushed into an overcrowded cell, they, pale and confused, tried to control themselves, hoping that everything would be cleared up in the near future - the truth would triumph, but in vain! And in their last hour, when the bolt of the rifle was already clattering, many of them despised themselves for powerlessness and gullibility, cursing the new government! They lived with old ideas about the power and laws of those distant times, when it was possible to demand an open charge, file complaints with the prosecutor's office, consult with a lawyer, dismiss the prosecution and the court, and use many other legal opportunities for defense.

The new government, preparing for the Great Terror, canceled all this as bourgeois prejudices and simplified the procedure for deprivation of liberty and life for their class enemies. The personal instruction of the Leader to aggravate the class struggle in the provinces with its dense obstruction, stupidity and illiteracy of the authorities was received jubilantly! They began to settle scores on old debts, persecution began at meetings, rural gatherings, undermined the past, wrote denunciations, intrigued on a large scale, but did not disdain a trifle. It has also become dangerous for honest people to live - they will be declared an enemy of the people for not condemning a brother, matchmaker or neighbor and not throwing a stone at them. This wild bacchanalia seethed for more than one year. And Lepin remembered the story of his closest relative, frightened and tormented by the fear of arrest, who, walking one day through the city cemetery and seeing a monument, the inscription on which read that the name, a merchant of the 2nd guild, died on October 25, 1917, envied his death - left and did not see, did not hear and did not know how blood was shed, in torment and curses a new one appeared; with tempting equality, brotherhood and justice to the working man ... Here it is! And this release was not given to us as a pitiful handout, but we took it ourselves! Hurrah, comrades! And sincerely, with tears in their eyes, they sang the solemn hymns of the revolution.

The commander was also a romantic and was fascinated by both the revolution and its victorious ideals. He was born under a lucky star, he did not experience the full extent of sidelong glances for his past. It so happened that, speaking French and German, he ended up in an analytical group at the General Staff, where, on the instructions of the Council of People's Commissars, the diplomatic materials of the former Entente were studied, and he worked hand in hand with the new apparatchiks of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. He sincerely admired and was infected with the revolutionary enthusiasm of the Chicherin team, where at that time proposals were being prepared for the Genoa Conference - the first peaceful one, where the Bolshevik government was recognized as a party to the negotiations and the assignee

of the debts and obligations of old Russia. Then Lepin was abroad for many years, served in the advisory apparatus on military issues in Turkey, Mongolia and China. He saw a lot, felt pride in his country - the Soviet of Deputies - and only so did the emigrant newspapers call his homeland. And they wrote a

that a handful of corrupt intellectuals, together with representatives of the old officer corps, went into the service of the Bolsheviks for lentil stew! This was the truth - no one counted on more of the current ones who voluntarily transferred, and therefore they did not grumble at the scarcity of salaries for foreign assignments, modesty of life and other curtailed material benefits, but were proud that they had a smart government behind them, with which many powerful people of this world and those one hundred and fifty million warmed up by the revolution, hardened by a civil war unprecedented in history with its hardships and deprivations ...

He returned home in 1940, when the great bloodletting in the country ended, but the paralysis of fear still made itself felt in the combat capability of the army organism. Fear of responsibility struck all, without exception, early. and the political composition of the invincible, famous, legendary, sung in poetry and songs! Lépin did not recognize his military environment. Irrevocably gone is what the former staff captain liked so much in revolutionary innovations, and above all, the openness of judgments between senior and junior commanders. This was not the case in the old army - there were many barriers that prevented such phenomena. The etiquette of officer behavior worked out for centuries lived in the blood of servicemen forever. The revolution, having taken the best qualities from the people at first, introduced them into its army; including the form and content of communication between commanders. But now it's all gone. And looking around, Lepin realized that this was no longer the same army that he knew in Frunze's time. And I also understood that that early revolution, having completed its glorious path, died, and its surviving soldiers silently and unquestioningly carried out the command of the great System. No, he really did not recognize his environment: the bold, truly revolutionary proposals for building and strengthening the army disappeared. Gone is the openness of judgments, the exchange of opinions was carried out with caution, frank conversations at friendly meetings or feasts have sunk into oblivion forever. Also unusual for him was the persistent praise of the wisdom and infallibility of the Leader and the party led by him, his countless portraits that filled the stations, squares and streets of Belokamennaya. So on the majestic building of the former Revolutionary Military Council, now the People's Commissariat of Defense (in Lepin's memory it was the Alexander

school), on Znamenka, and now Frunze Street, there also hung a grandiose portrait of the General Secretary and his twelve colleagues in the Politburo - the 23rd anniversary of the October Revolution was approaching. This is how he remembered pre-war Moscow. Lepin will never

forget his first visit to the Personnel Department of the People's Commissariat. When he entered the reception room, there were about ten commanders in uniform, on buttonholes - from one to four "sleepers". And only one, holding a pink pass in his hand, was in civilian clothes. Lépine sat down next to him on a vacant chair, and the mocking glance of the "civilian's" gray eyes struck him. Why, this is the Kuznetsov regiment commander! And he remembered the summer of the nineteenth: the Moscow region, the collection of painters from the battalion and above, a hot day and this gray-eyed strong man, enthusiastically and vividly, without an outline, outlined the essence of preparing an offensive as part of a regiment. Then he left as a division commander on the

Eastern Front. And now, turning to him, Lepin said:

"I have the honor to talk with painter Kuznetsov? That's just

I forgot your name, because we have known you since the nineteenth.

"Yuri Mikhailovich," he introduced himself. "I remember there was such a thing, but it was so long ago!"

"Why are you in civilian clothes?" Lepin asked.

Kuznetsov hesitated, and then with a sad, apologetic smile

quietly said:

"You see, I was returned to service from remote places ..." Lepin had heard a lot about the return of the repressed to the army. He was imbued with involuntary respect for Yuri Mikhailovich, and he, smiling, trying to cover his gapped mouth, said: "I was arrested and removed from the post of commander, general

I wore out the uniform in the camp, but did not have time to get a new one ... "

But at that moment the secretary - such a dashing boy with two "cubes" - went to the middle of the reception room and read out the list of invitees; Kuznetsov was listed first. He got up, with the usual movement of a military man pulled up a cheap, Muscovite suit, and, saying to Lepin: "I have been waiting for this hour for almost four years ...", he disappeared behind the door of the office. He returned a few minutes later, smiling from ear to ear:

“He was assigned to the Moscow District, Deputy Commander Stepanov, he had just returned from Khalkhin Gol, we know him from the academy. And further. I was reinstated in the rank of major general and sent to a resort in Sochi, and the housing issue was also resolved - my wife will be glad, very happy, so much time without her corner, - he sighed with relief and, looking at Lepin with his expressive gray eyes, continued enthusiastically: - No, you understand, I still can't come to my senses, and I can't believe that all this is happening to me, that yesterday's "convict", who has twice been in dystrophics, is now destined to put on a uniform, stripes and serve in Moscow!

All your delight and the heat of the soul of the happiest of the happy Yuri Mikhailovich expressed to Lepin in a whisper, with long pauses.

“Have you never been there? ... And God forbid anyone to experience it! It's hard for you to understand me, but believe me, it's better never to see this ... - and tears welled up in his gray eyes. He began to hurriedly tell his commander's odyssey. At that moment, he wanted to hug all the unfamiliar commanders who were sitting here and talk, talk to them endlessly about his unexpected happiness! But the commanders sat silent, stern, immersed in their thoughts, and therefore the former commander saw in Lepin the only one to whom he could lay out everything that had accumulated in his soul and share his unexpected luck that fell on him unexpectedly! Now Lepin was closest to him: - I'll wait for you, and then we'll sit somewhere together, because you are my old acquaintance, respect me, stay with me for an hour or two. My train is in four hours, I'm going to my wife, I have her in Zagorsk with our friends. How happy she will be! At first, she and I did not believe that I was free, and now, incredibly, we have returned the title, given an apartment! We did not expect this!”

Kuznetsov literally shone with happiness, he became younger before his eyes: the wrinkles on his face were smoothed out, his shoulders straightened, and his gray eyes were wide open with their joy, like those of an enthusiastic young man! And, looking at him, Lepin himself felt a surge of joy and could

not refuse him in request. Lepin was received by the senior assistant to the head of the personnel department. Here, perhaps, he understood how personnel officers have changed. At the table, in an armchair, sat a thin and bony captain with a gloomy, indifferent look. Despite the interlocutor, but looking somewhere

into the paper under his right hand, he read in a hoarse, abrupt voice an extract from the order on the secondment of Lieutenant Colonel Lepin to the Shot academic courses in Solnechnogorsk. Then, looking at Lepin with his dull, inexpressive eyes, he asked if he had any personal requests or claims regarding the organization of life, whether he had received all the allowance certificates. The questions were formal, but from the tone of the conversation, Lepin all the time felt the superiority of the captain over him and could not understand the reason for this. Later, he will understand that this was the already developed style of a new generation of personnel officers who replaced the first composition of the Revolutionary Military Soviet era, where there was less bureaucracy, more trust. Since the mid-30s, completely different people have come here. An atmosphere of suspicion, distrust, superiority over all who entered here, firmly settled in this institution. It was already the style of a new stage in the development of the state, set from above and strengthened in the new conditions for many years.

A few minutes later, he and Kuznetsov were already sitting in a small cafe on the Arbat and drinking the Crimean port wine Aygeshat. The fact that in the moment of revelation the former commander told Lepin completely turned his ideas about reality. It turns out that somewhere out there, in the vast expanses of Siberia, hundreds of thousands of people were doomed to extinction behind barbed wire. He never had to meet with those who, having been there, managed to return from there. Kuznetsov was the first to tell him the fate of the camps, terrible in its hopelessness.

"Believe me," Kuznetsov said bitterly, "the most terrible thing for me at the beginning was the realization that I was sitting for nothing! And then in the camp hunger finished me off, and there were no other thoughts, except: I want to eat! Hunger tormented me like a beast, and I turned out to be weak in reprisal, and all because of the fact that my ulcer worsened from hunger and high acidity. And I, unseasoned, unprepared, only thought about food and irritated myself more and more! Then I met a simple peasant: he survived the famine in the Volga region and told me how to overcome the famine. And prayer helped me, a conversation with God! And when I turned to Him, I comprehended a part of His wisdom and love for man. I began to help others, instruct with a word, and for the first time became proud of myself when I shared a ration of I

So gradually, day after day, I humbled my body and strengthened my spirit, reviewed my whole self from the outside and realized that all my life I had been an egoist, intolerant of my loved ones, subordinates, not responding with love to love, I passed indifferent to it. And all this is because I quickly received both the rank and the position, and the revolution gave the right to uncontrollably dispose of people: to break their will, to bend according to their command, to fulfill the order. However, I never thought about the higher meaning of life. I am ashamed that only the camp brought me to my senses, and, having gone through the seven circles of hell, I realized that love and service to a person give rise to reciprocity and understanding, and cruelty gives rise to ineradicable evil, cripples and oppresses the soul. I remembered my path and was horrified: in civilian life, I and my commanders were merciless towards the whites, and yet they are brothers born in the same Russia. We must not forget how we burned a trainload of wounded and typhoid Kolchak's army on the Siberian Railway near Krasnoyarsk. And I repented, remembering the "heroic" deeds of the regiments of my division. After all, it was evil, misfortune, meanness. But all this was done for the sake of her - the saint, the people, the multi-million dollar, which was supposed to destroy the evil born of capital! And I served her and went into her with my head and heart ... - Kuznetsov thought a little, but illuminated by something new, continued his revelations: - That fraternal war gave birth to many heroes, among them were unforgettable, who captivated us, igniting them with frantic speeches, and called for the victory of the proletariat on a world scale ... - Looking into Lepin's face with his intelligent gray eyes, radiating some kind of extraordinary power of inner kindness to the one who looked into them with kindness and love. His gaze was inquiring, and an invisible current of mutual Trust swept them both. The former commander sighed happily and, after taking a sip from his glass, said in a lower voice: "Some were for me then a model and an example of serving the revolution!" Many years have passed, but I still remember, see and feel their frantic energy, will, fortitude. Like the heroes of Hugo, they could both reward and immediately put the recipient up against the wall. And believe me, they did all this with inspiration, beautifully! Everyone who heard them at the rallies was fascinated by such a passion for victory, blindly believed them, going to their death. They acted on the crowd like alcohol with cocaine - they were insanely amused, called

and won, often against the common sense of military rules. The strength of the spirit of one person embraced thousands, and yesterday, still hungry and cold, ready to leave positions, shoot down commanders and commissars, succumb to robbery, we boldly went into battle, inspired by revolutionary idols. - And he added bitterly: - Now other times have come, many have turned from heroes into enemies, and I do not agree with this, but to say this out loud means to incur cruel, unjust punishment. I am sure that our descendants will talk about it freely, the time of cruel social revolutions will end, the people will get tired of the struggle, upheavals, dumbness and will want a smooth and free movement of life, without a bridle and threats. "And, again looking into Lepin's eyes, he said with a guilty smile: "Forgive me generously, my revelations are with you - a balm for my soul, which has not yet grown stronger at will ..." Then the conversation

with Kuznetsov was for Lepin a new page in his life. He looked with different eyes at the world around him... They said goodbye on Arbat Square, Kuznetsov's Muscovite jacket flashed and disappeared into the crowd at the entrance to the subway. They never met again, but, according to rumors, General Kuznetsov successfully commanded a corps somewhere near Lepin. Fascinated by the

memories, Lepin did not notice how Sazonov was already finishing his speech. From facial expressions, he realized that the chief special officer of the division did not use his capabilities and did not make him once again remember that there is an invisible, omnipresent control. The chief of staff mentally approved of his behavior this time as well. He, despite his prejudice towards army counterintelligence, respected the captain as a person for his calm, humane tone when communicating with officers and even liberality towards the guilty. Their sympathy was mutual, they established that invisible bond of understanding of the commonality of the fulfillment of duty, accuracy in words and deeds and commitment without superfluous words and assurances. Dmitry Vasilievich this time did not use his privilege to cut the truth-womb to the fathers of the commanders and make them cringe. Sometimes his pedagogical practice helped him, prompting him in what tone it was necessary to speak about the shortcomings of the service, what words to use in order to maintain the general spirit of exactingness and submission.

Even at the beginning of his service, Sazonov asked his former boss why he should be the last to speak at meetings and talk about shortcomings in the service. And Guskov, as always with a mother, explained to him: "Here, trakhtarakh, your mother. When there were still commissars, they were higher than the commander and fully responsible for politics and everything else, and even for the commander. And now, with your rabble... when unity of command has been established, the commander is the head of everything, and the political departments - read newspapers, the history of the CPSU (b), hold meetings, but do not interfere in the arrangement of military service and only help with a word! And if earlier he was more important than the commander and could write political denunciations against him on all lines of service, now he has lost these rights, and the commander has strengthened, and now the former commissar is no longer the first person in the division, but the third, after the chief of staff. And now the commander holds everything. And, stretching his bony fist forward, he showed: - That's where they should be, and now everything depends on the commander. Well, we, special officers, are of a different kind, and we do not obey the division commander, he keeps us at attention! will not put! Comrade Stalin did the right thing. From the beginning of the war, he introduced our counterintelligence to the NKVD and said that at least someone should stand above the commander and keep him under control. So I say: that's what the pike in the sea is for, so that the crucian does not doze off! So, my dear teacher! And now I am the only one at a meeting who can point out the facts, regardless of titles, to poke anyone's nose at all the shortcomings of the service! Only I have been given such a right, and I will use it, and some will see the sky the size of a sheepskin! And you too, teacher, don't be a slobber, be tougher, beat your own - strangers will be afraid! So I'm asking you: why didn't you press your [PNSh\[7\]](#) for accounting? After all, then he said: and that the Germans are fighting more competently, and that our equipment is weaker ... After all, here, once or twice, and according to a closed Decree - direct praise of the enemy. This is now more important than anti-Soviet agitation. What about you?! He began to come up with mitigating circumstances that he was a career officer, graduated from college. But I wouldn't regret it, so I started a case, and then arrested me - that would be the result of your work and authority too. As soon as you made a "landing", then immediately everyone around you would run into the regiment and look into your eyes, and you ... Drooling dismissed - the hand does not rise to start a case against such a military educated. Yes, there are so many of them I have in the Mariins

there were thousands of literate, educated, colonels, generals. All of them were "zekes" and enemies of the people for me! And these literate people made up a military conspiracy against Comrade Stalin! It was not for nothing that they shot all this contra, although they were marshals, there are different Tukhachevskys, Bluchers and others! And when every tenth was put into consumption, that's when they crawled up to the legs of Joseph Vissarionovich! - And, trembling with excitement, splashing with saliva, he almost shouted: - And I'll tell you frankly: there are still a lot of them, pests, in the army! One of our captains told me at the training camp that General Pavlov, the former commander of the Belarusian Red Banner District, lost his vigilance towards the Germans, brought himself a steal of Polish blood from Bialystok. She, they say, danced there in the presence of the Poles in cafe-shantany. And he dragged her everywhere with him, even to staff exercises! And who knows, maybe she was recruited by the Nazis, and Pavlov warmed her up! That's why the Germans destroyed all aviation at the airfields - they started technical preventive maintenance, but who knew about it? Only the environment of the commander and his headquarters! That's why they slapped him, and they did it right ... So you say that it was necessary to figure it out - there was no time, a German lane, and Pavlov, Timoshenko reported to Comrade Stalin that they were about to stop, and on July 7 they were already in Minsk ! Well, you tell me, isn't that a betrayal?! I would have this Pavlov, but I would have made cutlets out of him! Almost all of Belarus, half of Ukraine was given to the Nazis in almost three months! No matter what they prove to me, it could not have done without an enemy hand! - Such conversations always ended with Guskov, banging his fist on the table, almost shouting: - I see through all of them, fucking tarara, they spent a little in the thirty-seventh, they hid, and as soon as the war began, they surrendered in batches, to save life! I would have built them all, and in whose sector the Germans had broken through, I would have tied grenades to all the commanders, political workers, staff officers, I would have placed barrages with [RPD \[8\]](#) behind and forward, under the tanks, and whoever is back - that's a bullet! That's when the Nazis would not have passed! And if not for the 227th order, then Stalingrad would not have been defended, and they would have scrambled to the Urals! What, you don't agree with me? What was left to do? You say they didn't know how to fight, but I say they didn't want to fight properly, but as soon as this order came out and as they began to spank who was needed, they immo

environment - they knew: they would give up their position, they would slam anyway, so it's better to die like a hero than from their own. This order had to be put into practice, I myself, together with battalion commander Nikolaev, shot two company commanders. After all, a disgrace! Two companies could not withstand the attack of only one company! The battalion commander and I were nearby and immediately realized that these two, in order to save their skins, fled from the Germans! We immediately disarmed them in front of the formation, Nikolaev immediately one, and I the second from the "TT", and immediately ran to attack the Germans. And they did not expect that we would turn around so soon, they did not even have time to gain a foothold, we knocked them out with a bang! Everyone tried for three, especially the platoon ones: they understood that they had just killed two, but they could have fastened them. So Nikolaev and I received the Zvezdochka [9] . Do you remember how we washed in the department. And Nikolaev was killed during the summer offensive. The battalion commander was dashing - he spared neither himself nor the soldier and, as they said, he always went on the attack ahead in the most dangerous areas.

Guskov and his passionate tirades then and now remained a mystery to Sazonov. Guskov is no longer there, and Dmitry Vasilievich can still hear his abrupt voice, his face twisted with hatred. And where did he get so much anger, who and how drove it into his limited mind, not devoid of practicality. Well, and most importantly, how could he walk, sleep, eat, drink vodka with this anger that burned everyone and everything around. Sazonov did not find an answer, but would like to know ...

The meeting ended, everyone fell out together into the blackening mist of the February night. And somewhere on the right flank, an easel machine gun rattled dully, and the reflection of rare rockets from the front edge said that the front was near, and the enemy, digging into the ground, would stand against them tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, and no one but them, will not cut through its defenses, will not suppress its cunningly disguised firing points and will not break into the labyrinth of trenches and trenches, but, bleeding, with hands trembling with fear and excitement, will meet and will fight back from the same brutalized ones like themselves, only dressed in greenish gray overcoats, with a visor cap under the helmet, who received the order to hold the line at any cost. So it was, and they held on, turning into countless counterattacks, but strength, as they say, brings down straw. Now the confidence in victory was complete, and they believed in its inevitability, as in the coming of spring, from the general to the last waggon. She could be late, with frosts, with cold, gray skies,

but her arrival was inevitable and now nothing could change the course of the war.

Chapter V. SECRETS OF THE OFFICE

Half an hour later, Sazonov and Bondarev, passing by the outer post, opened the door of their dugout, with its familiar spirit of temporary front-line housing, where the smells of tobacco, food, spruce logs, wide floor planks were mixed, still retaining the untrodden virgin whiteness of wood in the corners. There was a table in a small corridor, on it was a "bat" lantern with a well-worn glass. At the table - the duty officer of the department - Sergeant Fokin with the same file of "Komsomolskaya Pravda".

Sazonov loved accuracy in any business, and, knowing his captiousness, the department strictly observed the rules established by him to maintain a poor front-line life. Sergeant

Kalmykov, who met them, reported to Sazonov in the prescribed manner that they had called from the Special Department of the Army and warned that their work would be checked next week and that Samsonov, their curator, would call him tomorrow morning. "Dinner for two is in the oven, and I'll work a little more," Kalmykov added, "by the way, I picked up all the mail for you and what's for signature, we'll have a courier dispatch tomorrow. If you have anything else, then there is still a lot of space in

the inventory ... "So, washing down delicious boiled millet with sweet tea, Dmitry Vasilyevich opened the folder of urgent requests and immediately came across a message printed on bad paper from the Oryol Directorate of the NKVD:" ... according to the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of 10.03.43 Execution was carried out against Mikhail Nazarovich Kazakov, born in 1887, a native of the Oryol province. Krutovo, who worked for the invaders as the burgomaster of the village of Muranovo. We have established that his son, born in 1916, Kazakov Nikolai Mikhailovich, Art. lieutenant, serves in the ranks of the Red Army p / p 39732 "E". We send a request for a possible operational use..."

After reading the text again, Sazonov was convinced that there was no mistake - this was the chief of staff of the first battalion of the 621st rifle regiment, now Captain Kazakov N.M., whom he knew from the Kalinin Front,

where their division, after fierce fighting, defended the regional center of Panino, which changed hands three times. This is where the platoon commander, then Lieutenant Kazakov, distinguished himself by holding a brick factory on the outskirts of the district center for two days. He was given reinforcements, and he remained there, and the reinforced platoon was like a sharp nail in a boot for the enemy. And, not knowing how many of our soldiers were there, he tried to attack the plant, but the platoon commander, skillfully changing firing positions on the territory of the plant, over and over again beat off attempts to capture this patch on the move. Then it was used by the division commander as a springboard for the liberation of the regional center. After this battle, Kazakov became a senior lieutenant and company commander, and now five minutes to the battalion commander - and suddenly this story with his father! On the one hand, Sazonov knew that the winged and noble, said by the Leader himself, "the son is not responsible for the father" in reality almost always turned into distrust along the party line, bosses, team and even friends, although this was already less common. As for the political workers, just give them this news! They always keep such facts in their clips and, if necessary, will use another saying - "an apple from an apple tree ...", forcing the atmosphere of the struggle against the class enemy, increased vigilance, hatred of the enemy, and for all other cases of political

education.

Dmitry Vasilyevich became thoughtful and with determination scribbled: "To Sergeant Kalmykov - in the matter of general correspondence ..." And, like a novice chess player, he guessed the situation for only one or two moves: perhaps Kazakov will be a battalion commander, and maybe a regiment commander, if he survives. And he is a fighting and enterprising officer, and he recently received an order, and they do not have a soul in the battalion: frank and fair ... And if you now acquaint the political officer in political affairs, then it is not known what will happen from this. Each time, in the presentation for a new title or award, information about the parents was indicated in the lens. And if it is written there that his father was hanged for cooperation with the invaders, then he will never see a title or awards. He simply will not be included in any list, and let him be a heroic officer, but he will never advance further than his position. There were many ways to get around such an officer with a rank, award, position, and one of them was to keep silent about his

merit in battle, personal heroism and commanding skill. Another way is more subtle and vile, using Marxist dialectics - yes, he is an intelligent commander, but he does not pay enough attention to the education of his subordinates, he does little work on political self-education, all his successes were achieved spontaneously, and not as a result of a painstaking and thoughtful attitude to his duties. Well, and, of course, they will add about the moral character, but here, if desired, you can always find many shortcomings. It will be very insulting to Captain Kazakov when his officer friends receive awards, promotions, and he, silently swallowing insult, would ask himself for the hundredth time: "But what do I have to do with it: we were separated by thousands of kilometers, he lived his own life, and not me prompted him to serve the occupiers ... "A burning resentment, like a fuse in a grenade, would stick out in him for the time being, and, being a decisive and courageous person, he would certainly find death in battle, preferring it to his humiliation!

These were the thoughts that visited Dmitry Vasilyevich when he deliberately saved Kazakov from trouble. And, looking at this official, dishonest denunciation, already almost lost among other papers, he felt that he had acted at the behest of his heart and soul and went against the rules of the environment established by experienced people, sophisticated in the ability to do everything so that the movement of kindness, compassion, mercy was stopped at the very beginning. And didn't Senior Lieutenant Kazakov deserve compassion and mercy? After all, it was his father, and, probably, he loved him, and it is not known under what circumstances he began to serve the Germans, and also, probably, there were mother, sisters, brothers. All this was wrapped up in a complex lump of human grief and suffering as a result of a damned war. That would be where you need to sympathize with a person, encourage, support! But didn't the platoon commander Kazakov save dozens, and maybe hundreds of lives, by keeping that "patch" under continuous mortar fire and Nazi counterattacks. Yes, it was so, but... This is where the rules of a ruthless dictatorship come into force. No compassion - all this is an invention of priesthood and a rotten, unstable intelligentsia! Mercy could unite people on a human basis, but this could not be allowed, it would be contrary to the rule of fighting enemies, weakening the continuation of the world revolution! AND

Sazonov thought: now, if there were no these rules, life would be simpler and more honest. But he had no idea what trouble he would have with this ill-fated request. After reviewing the

mail to be sent and checking the punctuation marks as a teacher's old habit, he glanced at his watch - it was ten o'clock. All around there was silence, and only the earth rustled, crumbling from the walls of the dugout, and the forest mice, which had come running here to the warmth and smell of food, occasionally squeaked in the dark corners of its compartment. Finally, he reached a voluminous folder with instructions and orders from his main special office. He treated the documents of the Center reverently and respectfully. It seemed to him that there, at the top, the most intelligent and capable people were gathered, and only they, in the most difficult moment, can find a solution to all issues and, most importantly, foresee all actions and events, suggest how to proceed. Reading the exact, precise words of orders, orientations and their resolute orderly tone, he saw behind them people who were harsh, ruthless and unprincipled in achieving their goals. Sazonov could not even know that this was a common style emanating from the headquarters of the only ruling party, and it was strictly observed by everyone without exception. There was a rumor that Abakumov once received a call from the Rostov Department of the NKVD and was told that his own sister had been detained for petty market speculation, and asked what to do with her? "Act according to the law" - such was the answer of the head of military cou

From time to time, Dmitry Vasilyevich would like to soften sharp, irreconcilable, too stuffed with excessive cruelty orders, orders, where the dose of the necessary inevitability of punishment turned into a hundredfold retribution against the masses of the people. And now he is reading the order of the NKVD, which prescribes: on the territory liberated from the fascist invaders, take all measures to identify agents of the Abwehr, Gestapo, police and other special bodies, left, possibly, to conduct reconnaissance, sabotage and other subversive activities in the front line activities. And then there was a paragraph: "It is necessary to identify persons who collaborated with the invaders, and, first of all, policemen, employees of city governments, burgomasters, elders, translators, typists and other persons from among the service personnel, as well as persons from the intelligentsia who took part and

contributed to the establishment of the occupation regime. With regard to all the listed persons, if necessary, take measures of detention, interrogations, arrests and transfer to assembly points in district and regional centers.

Dmitry Vasilyevich mentally imagined the front line, countless villages, villages, regional centers and their completely impoverished and half-starved inhabitants, equally muzzled and robbed by both invaders and partisans. On their way, their division liberated dozens of villages, many of which were completely or partially burned, and only the brick chimneys of furnaces, as if appealing to goodness and peace, lonely and wary stuck out alone, without warmth and master's oversight. And people came out of the forests and ravines, anxiously rummaged through the ashes, looked indifferently at the passing troops. The joy of liberation was short: it flashed like a white-breasted swallow and left the fire victims alone with need. In any part, a fire is regarded by people as the most serious misfortune, but here in the Smolensk region, in the forest-steppe side, where there was almost no timber and not only logs - you can't get poles for a fence nearby - in these parts there was hope only for dugouts. And autumn was already on the threshold, and, like a trace of the Gone War, a groan of need and grief stood over this region. The German troops, retreating, became more and more furious and, carefully fulfilling the order - to leave the desert behind, they did not burn houses only where ours went close to them, preventing them from gaining a foothold. But different things happened. According to the small number of prisoners, the teams of torch-bearers did not particularly show zeal in the destruction of village houses. Maybe they are. they realized that by burning the poor huts, they doomed their inhabitants to invariable death in the coming winter. Maybe they were driven by a distant sense of compassion for this ill-dressed crowd of old people, women, children, driven out of houses before the arson, or perhaps a sticky fear of retribution. Reading the

order on the joint actions of special officers and territorial bodies of the NKVD to identify everyone who served and served the invaders, Sazonov did not find instructions there about the need for a thorough approach to identified accomplices, a full and objective investigation of all circumstances and facts of cooperation with the Germans. The executors of the order were ordered

identification of the entire circle of accomplices without taking into account any extenuating circumstances for them. Sazonov imagined to the smallest detail how this would be carried out in practice, and already foresaw how much firewood would be broken in the execution of this tough order. He, as the head of the Special Department, had enough of his worries to ensure the combat readiness of the division - the main task of his service, and then there will be the hassle of identifying accomplices, arrests, detention, and the question is - at whose expense will they need to be fed, transported, guarded? There is no mention of this in the document. Mentally, he did not approve of this order, knowing that as a result, small fish would fall into their nets, and the real wolves would leave with the Germans. Low-value trifles scattered, fled, hid in dead corners, but there were others, but, like losing gamblers, they went for broke and, according to "fake" documents, went ahead to the field military registration and enlistment offices, hoping to slip into the army and get lost for the NKVD. Many of them got confused at the very first interviews - they were usually assigned to special officers under escort and here, according to a well-established scheme, they checked against the lists of wanted persons, and were r and for the final check they were sent to the PFL [10] and already there it happened to identify former policemen, punishers from Sonder teams, agents and informants of the field gendarmerie.

Dmitry Vasilyevich understood that this order introduced a new term - an accomplice, and this category of citizens involved in cooperation with the occupation authorities would henceforth be declared as malicious and dangerous criminals against the Soviet regime. With regard to the police, punishers and real voluntary servants of the new order, everything was clear to him - these were enemies, but there were others who served at the philistine level. All of them were involved in cooperation with the new regime: some of them sawed wood, washed floors, washed clothes, cooked food, looked after horses, typed on a typewriter and did ordinary work for the Germans so as not to die of hunger, receiving crumbs for your work. According to this order, they were all declared potential criminals, and no matter in what form this complicity manifested itself, now the very fact of being in the occupied territory was understood as a prelude to a crime or, at best, as an unseemly fact in the biography of any citizen.

Having little experience in identifying facts of complicity, Sazonov mentally imagined how much time and effort should be spent on investigating these cases! And after all, in such a situation, everyone strives to reduce his guilt and, in order to please the current liberators, slander three boxes on a neighbor. Go and deal with them later, the devil himself will break his leg until he gets to the initial authorities. This is where a series of slander, perjury, settling old scores with neighbors and acquaintances will go and go! And from envy and unreasonable anger inherent in Russian nature, they will drown each other, and then roam through the transfers and replenish the camps with a new color - a German accomplice. And there Already, on the bunk, to curse the war and the Germans, and their unlucky fate! When he had to interrogate some accomplices, he saw in the eyes of many fear, confusion, repentance, in others - poorly concealed anger, that now it was time to answer! And who thought about it at the beginning - after all, what a force the Germans had, well, they thought, the end of Soviet power. And how many of them, our prisoners, were led from morning to night in columns, only a column of dust! So they thought that the entire Red Army was captured.

He recalled how one day a black-browed young soldier repented and wept before his eyes. She worked in the local commandant's office as a cleaner and cohabited with a non-commissioned officer from the guards; almost the whole village testified to it.

Silently and indifferently, head down, sat in front of him a brave-looking old man - a former soldier, a participant in the Brusilov breakthrough - a police coachman, his gray eyes silently spoke of the resignation to fate that had fallen to his lot. In a guilty voice, slowly but distinctly, he said: "That's right, the demon has confused me, but after all, two daughters-in-law with children came to us with an old woman from the city, and my sons serve in the Red Army, so I went to them. Yes, if I knew that ours would return, would I go to curl there! - he ingenuously explained his, as he thought, unintentional, but now it turned out, fatal act in his life. But now they will

be judged and they will be taken to a young soldier, and an old coachman, and many others like them, somewhere in the Urals or in Siberian camps, where their trace will be lost for relatives and friends for many years, well, maybe forever.

Sazonov, as a kind-hearted person by nature, sympathized with many of them and considered their complicity accidental, and, as he thought, it did not deserve a camp punishment, and what a danger these unfortunate people now posed for the Soviet government in their war-ravaged dwellings ... But an order is an order, and it must be done. He felt the breath of a merciless punitive machine, it demanded sacrifices and blood, its flywheel turned ominously and it was impossible to stop it! With all his being, he resisted cruelty to those weak and orphans whom he happened to meet on the front roads and who fell under the inexorable rink of war. But he was not given the opportunity to oppose such an order or condemn it - it's the same as throwing himself under a tank. With great annoyance, he scribbled the resolution on the order and put it in a folder for

execution. Another document of the Center was an orientation on the organization of work with agents behind the front in connection with a change in the strategic situation on the Soviet-German front. Sazonov skipped a few paragraphs glorifying the Stalinist strategy of the third year of the war, he was fed up with this, every party meeting, meeting, political study in the division, regiments began with Alleluia, rather boring and boring praises of His strategy, the depth of the plan to defeat the enemy, the foresight of victory over the enemy and others belonging only to Him, the brilliant qualities of a leader and commander! There was a time when Dmitry Vasilyevich believed this implicitly, and only in the fall of 1942, when political instructor Volkov was arrested, was this belief shaken. Agents and informants from

among the officers repeatedly reported that Lieutenant Volkov, in the commander's dugout of the battalion, in the presence of his entourage, expressed his thoughts about the beginning of the war and the mistakes of the command, caustically ridiculed the slogans of the pre-war period: "We will fight only on enemy territory", "We will crush the enemy with little blood, a mighty blow, a thousandfold reinforced by propaganda, movies, books and little books about the invincibility of the Red Army and its heroes-leaders - the Leader's associates in the civil war, the defeat of the intervention of fourteen states ... And Sazonov, sitting in a cramped dugout, by the light of an oil lamp read the messages of agents, already firmly clinging to the political instructor. At first he resented the harshness of Volkov's judgments: it was unusual to read

that the Red Army was defeated by such a small Finland, that the losses in Finland were enormous, and the army leadership did not know the methods of modern warfare, and that People's Commissar for Defense Timoshenko, in fact, remained at the level of the commander of a civil war division. While

development was underway, Sazonov was not only indignant at Volkov's reasoning, he was surprised and could not find an answer how and where such seditious thoughts could come from a sophomore student of the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute.

For two months of development, he was convinced that his "ward" was smart, well-read, well-versed in history, and, according to letters intercepted by the military censorship service, a tenderly loving son. Volkov was a good and sincere comrade: when the wife of the political officer of the battalion Chernyaev died and on this occasion he was given a short leave to arrange for his two young daughters, the officers of the battalion carried to Chernyaev everything that could be useful for supporting orphans, Volkov handed over a two-month officer's extra ration and a fur sleeveless jacket. How rich he was.

During the same time, under the influence of the opinions of the political instructor, Dmitry Vasilyevich imperceptibly began to look at reality differently: his thoughts shook his confidence in the inviolability of the proclaimed principles of justice and nobility in the country of victorious socialism and forced him to look and evaluate many events with his own vision and understanding. He gradually got used to Volkov's reasoning and was no longer indignant at the withering criticism, but caught himself thinking that he, an employee of military counterintelligence, largely agreed with the statements of the political instructor, but admitting even to himself that he shared his views was scary. He sympathized with Volkov, but would not want to be in his place, knowing that the political instructor was doomed. He terribly wished for some kind of intervention to break the loop of danger and pull this guy out of the tenacious special embraces. His

former boss, Guskov, as soon as the first reports of informants arrived at Volkov, with the instinct of an experienced "hunter" he immediately recognized and determined that his ward would constantly share his thoughts among his close circle, without this he could not exist and would hang up until his arrest to myself

a whole "bouquet" of facts, and if they are put together, it will be a systematic anti-Soviet, subversive activity. Yes, if there are still one or two little men who share or sympathize with his revelations, here you have an anti-Soviet group! In addition, Guskov realized that before him was a gullible son from an intelligent family, sociable by nature, however, to the great chagrin of the major, none of the relatives of the political instructor supported, but did not stop, did not warn about the danger of such conversations. And he was indignant that none of them rebuffed this clever man: "Do you understand, no reaction?! These doldons sit with him in the dugout and listen, as if spellbound. And no one will object to him. And there, you understand, out of five officers, two are party members, one is a candidate and two greenhorns are Komsomol members. It's good that you made one of them an informer, otherwise we wouldn't even know that Volkov is a complete enemy! He liked to teach because he was the boss, and also because he suffered from great conceit about his abilities - to recognize enemies under any disguise, with any disguise, and, showing his sinewy fist, in front of the interlocutor's nose, said: "I see through any person. I know what he breathes, and I will immediately determine what kind of bird he is! And I'll tell you that in a month I'll bring this political instructor under the "tower"! Do you want to argue? For extra rations for a whole month, huh? Weak?! You will see!" Guskov did not want to trust anyone and he himself started the development on Volkov. And once, showing Sazonov a large package, he said: "I looked into the water and felt that there was a tail behind him; urgently requested an officer's school in Sverdlovsk, and now, you see, they sent it! He was there on an observation mission, and there was also an anti-Soviet group, but, apparently, they didn't want to throw a stain on the school, sort of smart people, so they decided to prevent them, gave them a scolding, and then they graduated, and they quickly went to the front, and the case is archived. It's a pity that I didn't serve the school, I would have driven them all "where necessary" so that henceforth it would be disrespectful for anyone to defame the Soviet government! And after such a tirade, he began to consult with Dmitry Vasilyevich, what to give an operational nickname in the case of Volkov. He did this for a reason and, trying to somehow hurt his subordinate with the fact that he also belongs to the intelligentsia, he started from afar, using political knowledge gained in circles on the history of the

Lenin and Stalin, desperately misrepresenting their statements in his favor, he claimed that Ilyich never trusted these "wise men and Comrade Stalin, as a faithful Leninist, fulfilling his precepts, also did not favor them, but both of them hoped only for the working class and therefore the dictatorship of the proletariat will always be the main support in our state. And, by the way, how many times did Guskov again tell that he was a hereditary worker, that his grandfather and father bent their backs at the factory! Here he did a great job. As for the grandfather, he died in the village from cholera, and the father left the village for the city and roamed the corners for a long time, interrupting by odd jobs, until a place was found as an apprentice hammerer in Samara, in the workshops of the industrialist Logunov. But Guskov Jr. wanted his biography to be the most proletarian - he enrolled his grandfather in the advanced detachment of society and was proud of his origin.

Sazonov tried to object and convince his boss that he was wrong, and gave examples that our leaders always talked about the union of the city and the countryside and that the current intelligentsia is flesh and blood ... But his boss went into a rage, he did not tolerate objections - especially from his own subordinates - and on high notes, constantly swearing, threw countless examples of the instability of the peasants, the weakness of those who are wearing glasses and hats, to his interlocutor, hinting that his subordinate was also one of them. Sazonov was offendedly silent, and Guskov, pleased that he had the last word, looking into his eyes, said: "I called you for advice, since you are the only one with a higher education. So I say that you are a teacher, and he is an undereducated student, if it were not for the war, he would also be with the highest. So I decided to offer you a choice: "hat" or "snake". So you don't like the "hat", it reminds the intelligentsia. Well, okay, don't be angry, so let's write down the "snake". It is a pity that he has no accomplices and sympathizers, otherwise it would have been a group development and it sounded beautiful - "snakes"! Let him go alone to the tribunal! It is a pity that those who listened to him will go only as witnesses in the case. If it were my will, I would have them all together for non-information! So, my "student", learn from the personnel security officers how to work, gain your mind, all this will fit you in the future! Guskov, of course, did not tell his "opera", which forced him to take the development of the political instructor into his own production.

And this was done in order to distinguish itself once again in the eyes of the formidable Colonel Tumanov, head of the Special Department of the N Army, who once recalled at a meeting recently that Guskov had few filed cases in the division and no operational results: exposures, arrests, and he added with rude frankness that he would not tolerate idlers in responsible positions and that it was in his power to turn any head of department into a detective and send bulls to the battalion to twist the tails of the bulls! Guskov knew that in his personal file there was an official conclusion about his guilt in violating social law, and, of course, sycophants from the cadres presented Guskov's personal file on a silver platter to Tumanov, so a breakthrough was needed to earn the favor of his superiors. But how can you do it when his division was suffering losses, retreating, marking time. And here suddenly such a case - a complete anti-Soviet! Who provided the development? And they will say: it was not some ordinary operative who personally conducted the case, but the head of the department himself! Here, you see, he will receive a favorable look from Tumanov, and they will stop bowing his name at meetings!

With such rosy dreams, he, having abandoned the rest of the work of the department, only controlled the flow of intelligence reports on the content of conversations and conversations with the participation of Volkov, instructed individual agents on how best to call the one being developed for a conversation, how best to draw judgments out of him, which would then form bricks into the blank wall of the indictment, and how to seek out new witnesses and establish new facts and "facts" of the deliberate actions of his ward with anti-Soviet intent.

Sazonov, despite his secret sympathy for the doomed man, could not help him, and he lost control of himself. Maybe he was influenced by the message that his mother, sister and aunt had died during the night bombing, or maybe the death of one of his close, few friends in the company - the platoon commander, junior lieutenant Parfenov. He seemed to have a presentiment of his misfortune, and the awareness around him reported that he had become withdrawn, and although his monologues had become shorter, they were still filled with caustic bitterness only to him the truth he understood.

At this time, their division was trying to recapture the district center Khramtsovo - a beautiful, despite the gray November days, a village with two hills and a church between them. Three frontal attacks of two rifle regiments unfolded, as if under a blueprint of a staff clerk, and the Germans, just like yesterday, like on the third day, having discovered preparations for an attack, from afar, from closed positions, without a break, they fired heavily from guns hastily, some like open trenches of the first line, where battalions of riflemen were already gathering in clusters, ready to attack the village at the signal of three red rockets. Turning pale with fear and mortal danger, mentally crossing themselves and asking God to have mercy on them, under the obscene cry of the separated platoon riflemen huddled together before throwing into eternity. But there was no signal - the division commander hesitated. The enemy fire increased, communication with companies and battalions was interrupted, and now, already distraught, deafened by exploding shells, without a command, first one at a time, and then in batches, the battalions, like spring water through a dam, rushed behind the second line of trenches, throwing the wounded and killed on torn to pieces by an unrelenting fire. Having somehow recovered from their mortal fear, urged on by the screams, kicks, and pummeling of their commanders, they convulsively clutched their rifles; again waiting for the signal. And here it is - the long-awaited rocket with a short red thread, like the life of a front-line infantryman, flashed and disappeared in the gray November sky. Well, obeying the commanders who were furious with fear and anger, as well as from their doom and hopelessness, obeying the herd instinct - not to be left alone, to be with everyone, - enticing others by example, the shooters fled into the first, almost destroyed trench, where there was still under frozen ground the wounded moved, but they were not noticed, and now the first ones jumped out of the line of trenches and rushed across the finely snow-covered field, as if this was their

salvation. The rear ones, already rare chains, also running, putting their bayonets forward, rushed after the first. The German artillery was almost silent, and only separate explosions were heard somewhere behind. And suddenly, in the middle of the comb of the advancing units, explosions of mines stood up like a black palisade, as if cutting the advancing ones: the front ones continued to go, and the rear ones lay under hurricane fire. Mine batteries, gathered together, concentrated their fire on a three

the fire did not abate; the battalions, tormented by fire, could no longer overcome the shelling zone, first lay down, and then faltered and began to roll back in rare gray waves to their original positions. And at this time it was clear how the front chains lay under machine-gun fire and could not raise their heads. Occasionally, out of desperation, someone tried to rush forward, but immediately fell - the German lines were shot in advance. And now the survivors, using every bump and bump, crawled back, again leaving the dead and wounded behind them. The divisional commander, without changing tactics, twice threw

regiments into the forehead of the enemy, and he, without changing anything in the means of defense, bled the division in two steps. And for the third time, when there were fifteen or twenty people left in the companies, the division commander, with despair and doom, once again prepared an attack on the ill-fated Khramtsovo. And when all the reserves, including riders from the convoy, the commandant's company and even the security department of the Special Department, the slightly wounded from the medical battalion and everyone who was alive and could hold a rifle, were preparing for the third, decisive breakthrough, a representative from the army headquarters was instructed to remove Divisional Commander Chernov from command and put on trial. The division was taken away for replenishment, but its old-timers for a long time remembered both the name of the divisional commander and those approaches to

the regional center, which were abundantly watered with the blood of their comrades. Just in those days, the miraculously surviving political instructor Volkov, already on vacation, especially angrily walked through the suspended commander, and a few days later Guskov summoned Dmitry Vasilyevich to him and said that now he would go with him to arrest Volkov. On the way, Guskov said that the other day, after the commander's meeting, where Stalin's speech was read at the November parade in Moscow, Volkov criticized the leader, saying that he himself had given Hitler the opportunity to deceive himself, and now he is ready to call for help great ancestors. "You understand, Sazonov, what kind of political instructors there are in our army! He's more dangerous than any spy or saboteur! That one is an enemy, recruited, and this one is voluntary! He corrupts his commanders, taking advantage of their trust, and you still

ask if there was a military conspiracy against Comrade Stalin?!" Volkov's arrest was routine, simple. They summoned him to the party organizer of the battalion, and

to the Party organizer, stunned by surprise, that he will now arrest a dangerous enemy who has committed a counter-revolutionary crime. Fear flickered in the eyes of the party organizer, and after these words he even pulled the pistol almost to his stomach and, as if spellbound, looked at

Guskov. When the political commissar entered the low, smoky iron dugout and, not noticing the special officer in the darkness, went up to an impromptu table of two ammunition boxes, where the party organizer was sitting in front of the oil lamp, mockingly loudly asked: "Well, Korobov, you tore me away from the meal. Our platoon commander Valyukov lost a can of stew to me on a bet, and as soon as we decided to chop it, you

called. He did not have time to finish the phrase, as Guskov, coming out of the darkness dryly, in a businesslike tone, he

said: "Lieutenant Volkov, you are under arrest ..." The political instructor muttered in surprise: "For what? Who you are?!" "I am the head of the Special

Department of the division, Major Guskov. Hand over your certificate and weapons to Senior Lieutenant Sazonov ..." - "I would like to know what crime I committed in order to arrest me ?!" Guskov pulled out a prepared warrant for arrest and search. Volkov slid his eyes over the paper and again asked: "It doesn't say why here ..." - "You will find out everything later, during the investigation." - "What is the consequence, I'm not guilty of anything!" "The investigation will look into everything, but now hand over your party card to Korobov and come with us." - "What, I'm being expelled from the party?" "If the investigation establishes your guilt." "But this should be decided by the general meeting." - "Definitely," Guskov threw in a mocking voice and added: "And now your party organizer and political officer of the regiment have agreed to your arrest." "Well, what about my things, letters?!" "Now let's send someone to the company." - "But I would like to myself ..." - "No, Volkov, sit with us, your things will be

brought," Guskov said already harshly. Half an hour later they left with Volkov: Guskov walked in front, followed by a slightly pale political instructor with a small suitcase, and behind them walked Sazonov, amazed at the everyday atmosphere of the arrest of a man whose thoughts and aspirations he secretly shared! And now, depressed by what had happened, he followed him, feeling remorse and justifying himself by the fact

the hands of his boss. But this was little consolation for the conscientious Sazonov. And he will long remember this gloomy November day, the cold hands of the arrested person, from which he accepted his weapon - from the hands of a former military officer, a former political worker, and now under investigation - citizen Volkov.

And now Dmitry Vasilievich shuddered involuntarily, remembering that Volkov had been sentenced by the division tribunal to ten years in prison. Ten years! It sounded like an eternity. He still hoped that the former political officer would be sent to a penal battalion, as was usually the case with convicts in the army. Sazonov thought, what if they would figure it out, and something would change - he did not know that the circular of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR for all military tribunals prescribed: "... persons from among the military and civilian personnel, in whose actions signs of crimes provided for Art. 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, are subject to be sent to serve their sentences only to the forced labor camps of the NKVD of the USSR ... "There was no hope that Volkov could wash away his crime against the Soviet authorities with blood - only a camp and a long "ten". This article was not subject to any amnesties and pardons. Guskov, rubbing his hands, said: "They didn't give him much, but nothing, the "ten" is also not bad. If he remains alive, he will remember for a long time and will order others how to deal with anti-Sovietism! Here, Sazonov, such things! True, I would have bet you an extra ration, he didn't pull on the "tower", but you yourself argue

refused."

The time was approaching midnight, and Dmitri Vasilyevich felt weariness creeping up from his very feet to his neck; it seemed to him that the light from the lamp had become worse, and his eyes began to ache from incessant attentive reading. Everything seemed to be calm in his soul, but, remembering his deputy, he felt bitter annoyance. How he lacked a reliable, open, congenial person! But all the previous ones and today have shown the quarrelsomeness, pettiness of Bondarev's nature. And again he remembered many things that he had not previously attached importance to - his friendship with the head of the political department of the division, Major Kuzakov, recently transferred from the apparatus of the Member of the Military Council of the N Army. It was rumored that for a long time he was a guarantor of the Member of the Military Council, General Kudryavtsev. Time

and the position left an imprint even on his appearance. In the presence of superiors - a respectfully bent back, a face with a half-smile and eyes with an expression of expectant helpfulness and respectfulness, like those of a seasoned foreman-servitors on an inspection check. It is not clear

why, but Kuzakov was looking for friendship with Sazonov. He was afraid of omniscient organs and cautiously fawned over Sazonov, but the latter paid no attention to him and behaved evenly with him, without manifestations of friendship. With the advent of Bondarev in the department, Kuzakov began to often run into his dugout, and Bondarev also paved the way for him and visited the political department more often than his service required. And Dmitry Vasilyevich would not have paid attention to this, if not for the delicate hint of Chief of Staff Lepin about this strange friendship between two senior officers. The chest just opened - Bondarev wanted to be the head of the department, and as soon as possible. He could not agree that a politically illiterate captain led him, a major who had experience in political work, and not just anywhere, but in the political department of the corps! And the fact that he did not have experience and knowledge of the operational work of army counterintelligence, he did not even think about it and hoped that he would have a deputy and operational staff, and they should be engaged in identifying spies and enemies, informing, agents, development, arrests and other cases assigned to special officers in front-line conditions, and he - to carry out the overall management of the department, represent it at meetings, party meetings, various assets of the political command staff, speak harshly, but smartly, politically competently and in a party-like manner: with criticism, pointing out shortcomings, setting general tasks, taking into account the current situation and explaining all the shortcomings in combat readiness for the sole reason - insufficient political education, underdevelopment of party organs and the Komsomol in companies and battalions with personnel. So, or something like this, Bondarev imagined himself as the chief special officer of the division, and he needed Kuzakov as an ally against Sazonov. He hoped that in his reports, thanks to their friendship, the head of the political department would be able to point out once or twice the impeccable behavior of the communist Bondarev, politically mature training, taking into account work in the corps political department, and

the resulting example of a communist leader in the officer corps of a division! Kuzakov knew that in addition to these qualities, his promoter must distinguish himself in his service, and this is usually reported to the leadership by his immediate superiors - Captain Sazonov, and no one else. But Bondarev has not yet done anything heroic and outstanding: there were no successes in exposing spies and other subversive elements for the department, and a trifle in the form of disciplinary offenses among the personnel did not count. Kuzakov frankly explained the current situation and recommended Bondarev to obtain from Sazonov such a task, which, if completed, would be successful and significant in the operational work of the department. And then Kuzakov could, through his connections in the military council and the political department of the army, help Bondarev to achieve his goal.

Kuzakov, in turn, counted on the fact that Bondarev, "promoted" by him, would remain loyal to him and help influence the division commander and push him away from the smart, but ironically disposed to political agencies chief of staff Lepin. On that night, Sazonov did not yet know about the conspiracy, plans and plans of these two, but he already had a prejudice against Bondarev. And only now, in the dead of midnight, he admitted to himself that "beloved" - so he christened his deputy, putting into this word the bitter irony of deceived hopes, would never be his close friend. To imagine that he would begin to discuss with Bondarev those controversial issues about the course of the war, excessive cruelty in the rear and at the front, and towards his prisoners, unreasonable suspicion of everyone who was in the occupied territory, he could not in any case. No revelations and reasoning with him and more demand for work! That's when he will have less time to run to the political department, Dmitry Vasilyevich decided.

And with a sense of relief, he scribbled a long resolution, where he assigned Bondarev the execution of the order of the Smersh Main Directorate for the selection and use of front-line agents on enemy territory. This order outlined the main task - to obtain intelligence information about the Wehrmacht's defense system, but this required a well-thought-out system and methods of penetrating the enemy's front-line territory,

legalization of perpetrators, and then the collection of intelligence and their transfer to the Center. But most importantly, performers were needed. And where to get them, such as the Order demanded: proven, skillful, morally stable, devoted to the party and government?! And again, remembering his "darling", he imagined how he would begin to fulfill the order, having no experience in this matter. "Let him worry, run, sit. He'll think about it, get down to business, maybe he'll take the right path, thought Sazonov. - And he answered himself: - Maybe he will improve, but there are very few chances - his service in the regional executive committee and in the political department spoiled him! Then Dmitry Vasilyevich took out another order from his front department, which indicates the need to identify enemy agents embedded in partisan detachments who crossed the front line from the occupied areas in connection with the intensification of the punitive actions of the Nazis on the territory of Belarus. He was tired of reading about how and where to interview partisans, what had to be filled out in the questionnaire for suspects and then sent these sheets to the field filter camps along with the suspects. Everything was clearly and smoothly scheduled, but it was not indicated where Captain Sazonov would take so many units of the operational staff to fulfill this order, and how much time would this scribbling take!

But now the folder of orders was empty, and Dmitry Vasilyevich began to read the last one, where hard and painstaking work was entrusted to his department: moods for going over to the side of the enemy, as well as with a criminal past, prone to disobedience to commanders, gambling, robbery, looting, theft, etc., as practice has shown, a preliminary study of the replenishment contingent in reserve regiments, marching companies helps to identify and prevent crimes in the active army, its rear units and strengthening their combat capability!..." And he read with interest the main part of the order - the order, where it was ordered to draw up a plan of preparatory measures, fill out by hand the cards for recruited route agents and send them to the accounting units of the front departments of the Special Departments, and themselves

"Routes", depending on the relevant legends, circumstances under should be introduced into transit points, field military registration and enlistment offices, reserve units, training regiments and battalions. And then there was a paragraph about which of the army commanders it was necessary to coordinate the dispatch of "routemen". And at the end of the order very strictly: "...report on the results of the events monthly to the Front Departments of the special officers."

Sazonov mentally approved the authors of the order. He doesn't know army criminals! They passed before him like detainees, arrested, under investigation, and not a single one of them aroused sympathy or regret in him. Externally, but more internally, they resembled each other: cruel, vicious, greedy. Many of them are former villagers, spoiled by heavy, unskilled and unusual work for them at numerous construction sites, disorder, homelessness, terrible barrack customs, thieves' companies that crippled their bodies, temper and souls. Like their ancestors, they did not like any authority and its laws and treated them without respect, but the authorities reciprocated, and its laws were bent and broken with excessive cruelty, leaving them no hope of forgiveness or mitigation of their guilt. Only the fear of the inevitability of punishment forced many of them to suppress the freemen in themselves, obey the commanders and meekly bear the heavy cross of a soldier of war. It was already midnight. Having finished looking through the papers, satisfied that no one

interfered with him - the telephone was silent, no one came, did not tear him away from this tedious but necessary occupation - he left the dugout. The sky was half clear of shaggy clouds and gleamed with distant stars. Somewhere far away, on the left flank, the reflections of illuminating rockets rolled, there was silence, but it was disturbing and frightening because of the proximity of the front.

Mentally, he was grateful to those who now, on this February night, are freezing in combat guards at the forefront, in a cold trench, waiting for the next shift, peering in the darkness of a winter night in that direction, where soldiers, too, only in a different uniform, were languishing in anticipation. shifts, froze and just as intensely listened to the silence of the forests, swamps and white snow of a foreign country surrounding them. Returning to the dugout and already falling asleep, he remembered that he had

received letters from his mother and his sister Varya; tried to imagine their faces, but sleep suddenly overcame him with the sweetness of soft darkness, and he went into it instantly and without a trace.

Chapter VI. INVESTIGATION

Lieutenant Kuleshov, having received Sazonov's instructions, first of all went to the regimental medical unit. A path trodden among gloomy firs led him to a dugout. On its plank doors, a soldier's craftsman painted a medical emblem with black paint, where over a disproportionately small bowl, a huge snake squinted with an eye, almost with a smile, as if encouraging anyone entering the only peaceful monastery on the territory of the regiment. Paramedic Myachin, a hefty big man from the Vyatka forests, knew the identity of the regimental special officer, and who did not know him in the regiment! The old-timers showed him to the newcomers from the replenishment as a landmark and, with a sense of hidden fear and respect for the organs, they said: "There, you see, he went with a tablet on his side - this is our special officer" - that's what Kuleshov was now called behind his back in the regiment - "tablet", investing in this word is a hidden meaning of attractive secrecy and secrecy and the inevitable punitiveness of organs. So Myachin, flattered by the unexpected arrival of the special officer, fussed, seating him on a stool, facing the only window in the dugout, and he himself began to prepare tools. Strongly ok, he told Sergei Vasilyevich that he was a master in these matters and that no one in the region had pulled his teeth better than

"I have novocaine in my stash, and I'll give you an injection, Comrade Lieutenant, and everything will go like clockwork!" - When Myachin made the first incision in the gums, Kuleshov did not hear the pain and only then felt it when the paramedic, making a brutal face, tried to pull out a tooth with forceps, saying: "I'll knock it off in a moment."

But now and then he couldn't do anything. They both got wet, and there was a sharp smell of sweat in the dugout. And when, finally, Myachin, with an inhuman effort, almost twisting Kuleshov's neck, jerked for the last time, he felt the crunch of torn flesh and at the same time heard Myachin's triumphant cry: "Here he is, my dear, jumped out ...", which showed the exhausted patient bloodied, with brown tanned tooth with three roots. And already rinsing his mouth, Kuleshov stumbled with his tongue on an unusual emptiness on the right side, but the pain disappeared. This grace he

felt it much later, but now he thanked Myachin and moved to his dugout. Remembering the

instructions of his boss, he sketched out a draft plan to clarify the circumstances of the morning emergency. Mentally reasoning, he scrolled through several options for the investigation: it was useless to interrogate the commander of the platoon of snipers, Lieutenant Vaskov - he would tell lies from three boxes, he would say - you won't figure it out for a whole year. Kuleshov recalled how at the accelerated "Smershev" courses a lecturer - a gray-haired, with a good-natured face, from former prosecutors, reading them a scanty course on conducting investigations, said that you need to start with a wide range of people - witnesses of the incident, gradually narrowing it down, and getting different circumstantial information, start interviewing suspects. And, it seems, this method was called (Sergei Vasilyevich remembered the tricky word for a long time and finally remembered) - deduction: this is when you need to move from the periphery to the center of the investigation. He did just that. Half an hour later, sergeant Fetin and the foreman of the platoon, the black-eyed Tatar girl Sanida Akhtyamova, were sitting in his dugout. Sergei Vasilievich, already revived from unbearable pain, began a conversation with Akhtyamova. Like most of those called to the Special Branch, she was visibly agitated, and her agitation intensified when he warned her with deliberate seriousness of the consequences for perjury. She became even more excited and, no longer restraining herself, at the first question about what she knew about the incident, she spoke quickly, crumpling a small handkerchief in her hands: "Comrade Lieutenant, Vaskov is to blame for everything, he sent Zina and Lyuba, - but, recollecting herself, she corrected herself, - that is, corporal Zhukov and private Kovalev in the outfit, and they only arrived from the gala evening from the army headquarters in the morning and did not have time to rest; Lieutenant Vaskov ordered them to be raised, so Sergeant Fetin can confirm this, together with Vaskov they were sent to the position on duty. And yet, I'll tell you, Comrade Lieutenant, - and she, lowering her voice, quickly told Kuleshov that Vaskov, as known not only to her, but also to other girls from their platoon, molested Zhukova, he really liked her, she was so beautiful and stately, but he was an unwashed brain against her and kept trying to woo her, and even promised to marry, but she said: "Even if you shower me with g

he began to rage: he began to find fault with the service and the results of reaching combat positions, combat training and various other matters. And on the eve of the Day of the Red Army, captain Fedulov, political officer of the regiment, came to their platoon, ordered to build personnel and said that the command of the regiment decided to encourage two excellent students in combat and political training with an invitation to a gala evening and a friendly dinner at the army headquarters. There was such a couple in the platoon - Sergeant Popova and Private Khryukina. Their kill rates were the highest in the platoon. They were presented to Fedulov, but he grimaced - both of them were painfully unsightly in appearance and did not please him, and then he went straight to Corporal Zhukova and chose her, as everyone understood, for her cuteness and for her figure, and then he wanted to choose another one, but then Zhukova said that, they say, Comrade Captain, I had better go with my combat partner along the line, she says, I have an observer. And he also asked what it is, is she watching you, or what? And Zina explains, - when they go to the position together with her, she shoots, and she

watches. Then the captain agreed and gave the order to both of them to assemble. If Kuleshov had the opportunity and time, he probably would have gotten to the main culprit of that morning's emergency. He, without knowing it, was the major of the political department of the army Boris Volkov. He was entrusted with the organization of the gala evening. The arrival of distinguished guests from the army headquarters was expected. The day before, his boss, reading the script for the upcoming celebration, noted his good quality and with a sincere baritone explained that everything was provided for here, and even the performance of artists from Moscow, but the presidium should be enlivened by the presence of beautiful women, and our commander would be pleased to sit with a pretty face in the presidium. And he immediately gave the order to urgently call the divisional political departments and find out what they have there in the "women's" part, and bring the prettiest ones here, and let them keep the — .

mordovorotov for themselves! In this way, the attractive Zina Zhukova and a dozen other girls were gathered from a communications regiment, two field hospitals, a military office and a radio company of the VNOS se

Asian subservience to generals and senior officers and lack of education gave rise to many of them permissiveness, rudeness and rudeness towards their subordinates. It was at that time that each of them managed, under various pretexts, to get a paramedic, a medical instructor, a radio operator, a waitress from among the female military personnel for "personal" use - mostly by mutual agreement and rarely such cohabitation was forced. Everyone knew about it: at the top, in the environment - it was the subject of witticisms, good-natured ridicule, the writing of soldiers' tales about constantly field wives, referred to for brevity as PJ.

Kuleshov, of course, was well aware of this and had many data on this part on the commander of the regiment, Major Grigoriev, two battalion commanders, but he never reported this to anyone, believing that this was a delicate and personal matter and he never collected gossip about the commanders of his regiment. will not be. And he foresaw how the story told by Akhtyamova would end, and she continued to tell that the evening at the army headquarters dragged on, and the friendly dinner was especially long, which is why Zina and Lyuba arrived already in the morning, woke us up and treated us to sweets, and then did not oversleep and two hours, when Sergeant Fetin came, woke them up and told them to get ready for the position. Zina was stubborn at first, and Lyuba, who is more accommodating, tells her that Vaskov will not give life if we resist. Then they put on equipment, camouflage suits, took rifles and went to Vaskov for a

divorce. So the circumstances that preceded the abduction of snipers were clarified. By the

end of the day, Sergei Vasilyevich had already interviewed many of the platoon, and now it was Vaskov's turn. They searched for him for a long time, and then he entered the dugout and really turned out to be frail in appearance, with a thin neck, a freckled, dull face. Now Kuleshov, having almost complete information about what had happened, watched Vaskov and tried to suppress his dislike for him. He believed that the snipers were stolen only through the fault of the platoon commander. But he turned out to be a tough nut to crack - having a dodgy mind, despite his dull appearance and clumsiness, he defended himself with enviable perseverance and calmness. He rejected everything: the harassment of Zina Zhukova, and the testimony of other witnesses, and all the facts of an unfair attitude

Lieutenant, understand, they decided to slander me, agreed among themselves, and especially this Tatar Akhtyamova, acts as a ringleader only because I was demanding of everyone, and especially of her. She didn't know the materiel well, she was slacking off from classes, she wasn't engaged in supplies, and I had to delve into everything: both about soap and cotton wool. You understand, women are adults... Of course, I apologize for calling her a Tatar. You correctly said that nationality has nothing to do with it. I just misspoke." For a long time Kuleshov persuaded Vaskov to admit his guilt. The meeting in the division had already ended long ago, and Sazonov reviewed dozens of different papers, and the sentries at the dugout changed twice, and he, reading out separate passages from various interrogation protocols, convicting the platoon leader of being disingenuous, trying to blame everything on his exactingness to personnel platoon, slowly moved along the path of convincing Vaskov of his guilt.

Kuleshov decided to finish the interview and postpone confrontations with other witnesses until the morning, and at the same time give the platoon commander an opportunity to think and realize that denial is useless and everything is not in his favor. He released Vaskov and felt the weariness that had accumulated over the entire, almost sixteen-hour day, although he was happy that his tooth had been pulled out, and only one junior lieutenant had been injured during the shelling. And, trying to remember his last name, he instantly fell asleep.

Chapter VII. OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTING OF THE DEPARTMENT

Sazonov woke up half an hour before getting up. His orderly, Private Yegorov, the supply manager of the city school in his pre-war life, not old, but not young either - somewhere in his forties, had been with the captain for several months; he was very calm and unhurried in everyday life, he did everything slowly, but thoroughly and accurately. He learned the captain's habits well. And now he delicately knocked on the door - he brought hot water for shaving. Purring under his breath his favorite Bernes' "Dark Night", Sazonov shaved. Then Yegorov brought out a tin basin and, having wiped it dry with a rag, hid it in the corridor niche, and asked whether to bring breakfast here, to the dugout, or the captain would go to the staff canteen. From the delicacy, courtesy of the orderly, he always smacked of home comfort, forgotten during the war. Dmitry Vasilievich loved his dugout and preferred to have food brought to him in his compartment. In the meantime, he

sat down at yesterday's papers, rereading with a fresh mind the resolutions he had drawn. Then he took from the safe a report on the work of the department for the last six months of the previous year, made notes to himself in a notebook and mentally imagined the upcoming inspection of his department. She did not frighten him - his affairs were in order, thanks to Kalmykov, office work was carried out in accordance with all the rules, but there was almost no success in identifying, exposing and arresting the true

enemies. On operational records, there were about a dozen observation files, which included two officers who had been abroad on official business before the war. According to the instructions of the NKVD, from the mid-thirties, all persons, excluding only the nomenclature of the Party Soviet apparatus, who had been abroad, were taken into account by the authorities. Several officers were traced according to the testimony of those arrested through the People's Commissariat of Defense during the period of great bloodletting in the army in the thirty-seventh year - their trail was cut off at the same time, and from the files it was impossible to understand whether they were alive and in places of detention or died th

There was another interesting "deal" received from the NKVD in the Moscow region. An employee of [the SPO department \[42\]](#) was not too lazy to find a military unit and send the relevant papers to the front, at the place of service of Major Sobinsky Bogdan, commander of the divisional battalion of the engineer service, the favorite of the division commander for technical education and diligence. The major engineer got into operational records because his wife once studied at the gymnasium with a former typist from L.D.'s secretariat. Trotsky. The typist herself had long been somewhere in the women's Kaz- or Karlag, and the relatives and acquaintances she had listed ended up in cardboard folders and were waiting in the wings.

In addition, the captain had a dozen and a half cases of operational inspection for manifestations of anti-Soviet agitation, where, basically, ordinary soldiers and occasionally sergeants, former collective farmers, passed; they continued in their circle of soldiers, out of the simplicity of their souls, to scold the orders established by the authorities, the collective farms, the collective farm authorities, recalled their former life during the NEP, when the new government slightly let go of the reins, so that later they could re-harness, tighten the yoke for many years

throughout peasant Russia. Among these checks there was only one, which Sazonov personally controlled and did not trust anyone from the operational staff. In the third company of the second battalion of the 464th regiment from the hospital, with replenishment, ordinary Panov Georgy entered, who worked as a "civilian" on the railway, a shooter in a paramilitary guard. They appointed him the second number in the machine gun crew. Machine gunners are friendly people, it's not like riflemen in a company: some into the forest, some for firewood. In the machine-gun platoon, mostly literate, experienced and reliable people were selected. Approximately in a circle, each had 5-6 classes of the school, half of the calculations from hospitals, who had previously been in battles for Kalinin, Smolensk, where their division fought. The company commander always had to take care of his fire support, and the bullet platoon is a serious help for the shooters. Who, if not they, will cover the advancing company in close combat! Good, well-aimed machine-gun fire will not only support the thrust of the offensive, it will force the enemy to hide behind the parapet of the trench for a short time and thereby weaken his shooting power. Before the attack, as was customary in the infantry, the company commander ran to the machine gunners and, em

said, addressing them: "Eagles-machine gunners, don't let me down today!" And they did not let us down - each of them knew the machine gun by heart, with his eyes closed he could assemble and disassemble it. That's why Panov George was respected, that he mastered the materiel in a short time and, although he was the second number, shot perfectly, and he was already identified as the first number in the calculation. He was a quiet man, but one day, during one drink, Panov, in the presence of the squad leader and his fellow countryman from a neighboring company, expressed in his hearts his innermost, secret, which had tormented him for several years. And this must happen - the fellow countryman of the commander of the department in which Panov served was a secret employee of the department under the pseudonym Kurok. And all this happened during Guskov's tenure. He gave Sazonov a message with a resolution: to open a case and prepare for arrest. Merciful fate gave the machine gunner a chance to live and fight because Sazonov undertook to check the signal thoroughly. Agent Kurok, who was recruited on an ideological basis in 1942 into the reserve regiment, judging by the case, was an experienced and competent person. In his message, he lucidly and convincingly outlined the conversation with Panov: "A source reports that among us was a machine gunner Panov, and when we started talking about civilian life, Panov said that everything would be fine if it were not for this (cursing) Soviet power. I come to the guardroom, he says, and the radio keeps saying that life has become better and more fun, because the party is led by our dear comrade Stalin, Lenin's faithful comrade-in-arms. And now I'm listening to the whole shift on guard, my head swells from all these praises of the Soviet government and our unforgettable Joseph (here he again swore obscenely at our Supreme Commander-in-Chief and General Secretary of the CPSU (b) and added, they say, they won't say on the radio that they put my uncle Mitya, a hard-working peasant, he worked as a mechanic in our car depot, he was a party member, my aunt also told him - do not enter, do not climb into this pool. Did not listen, and exactly after Epiphany, in January 1938, they raked him in! And before that, all the authorities of our Penza "piece of iron" were arrested. It's terrible what was happening in the city - the "funnel" darted around at night (and cursed again). for boiling water, and the radio again "boo-boo-boo" and again about how well we live and how our people love our

survived, pulled out a revolver and began to shoot at the loudspeaker until he fell silent. Then, I remember, I opened the door, ventilated the guardroom, and sealed the loudspeaker with bread crumb and hung Pa in place, but my shift came and did not notice anything ... "

Dmitry Vasilievich knew his boss and his passion for arrests, but at first he carefully checked Panov for all operational records, including police ones, but he was clean and spotless like a baby. Then twice, through the agent, Kurok arranged meetings with Panov, but fate kept the machine gunner - either his mood was peaceful, or the conversation went in a different direction, but the agent never managed to extract hostile statements from him! If this was just an operational signal, then Sazonov, after checking, would send it to the letter case as a proven material, and it would lie there until the end of the century, but in fact such a sharp, almost terrorist statement, with obscene words addressed to the Supreme, - here Sazonov was obliged to start a case of an operational check and register it in the accounting group: Therefore, it lay in his safe, and his hands did not reach to conduct an additional check and remove this poor fellow from the operational record. Sazonov sympathized with the machine gunner also because in the last battles he remained alive and was presented to the Order of Glory 3rd degree. Breakfast was concentrated buckwheat porridge. Egorov took out butter and a

pack of biscuits, received on an additional officer's ration, spread two slices of bread and put down a glass with a darkened, silver-plated coaster - a gift sent to the front from a team of women from some disabled artel. After breakfast, Bondarev came to see him. His gloomy, heavy look did not bode well for those around him. "Why is my "darling" so dissatisfied?"

Sazonov thought to himself, and, being in a good and benevolent mood after breakfast, he still could not understand the reasons why his deputy was sitting with him in silence, and refused the offered tea. Dmitry Vasilievich almost forgot about yesterday's incident and clashes with him, but Bondarev remembered and recalled with bitterness and hatred the mortar shelling, the condescending tone of his boss towards him, as to an unshot newcomer, and, continuing to inflame his memory with resentment, he no longer

only despised, but also hated his boss for everything that was in him, and even for his indulgence towards him personally! Unaware

of anything, Sazonov, as if nothing had happened, with his characteristic good nature, shared his thoughts on the upcoming inspection of the department. And the "darling" sat and sniffed in silence, and was indifferent, and what could he advise Sazonov with his work experience. He had one thought: how long Sazonov would be his boss. Therefore, he mechanically agreed with Sazonov's order to review the letter files for all parts of the division and the primary signals coming from there from the security officers. His boss knew the vulnerable areas of the department's work, and it was there that the inspectors could pick up shortcomings, shortcomings in checking signals, providing information to prevent possible manifestations that undermine the combat capability of the division. A detailed discussion of all issues related to the upcoming test, which proceeded in the silence and indifference of Bondarev as a monologue of briefing, somehow hurt Dmitry Vasilyevich's pride. And he also noticed that he does not make any notes for himself, whereas before he always did this. And he thought of making a remark to him, but refrained: "Anyway, the hour will come, and I will ask him everything in full, then I will remember him." And with some kind of malevolence, he stopped the major, who was about to leave, with a movement of his hand, took out the order of the Center and let him familiarize himself, and he sat down at the table and delved into his papers, only occasionally observing the "beloved" and receiving complete satisfaction from the decision made to throw him the present

class.

Half an hour later, Bondarev mastered the text of the order and got acquainted with the resolution that the implementation of the measures was entrusted to him, he noticeably wilted, sweat broke out on his bulging forehead. Moving his lips, he re-read Sazonov's lengthy resolution several times over and over again. How he longed at that moment for everything to be the other way around and for him to be the head of the department, to sit at the table, but he would not put this captain at the table, but, as it should be according to the charter, would put him at attention and give him a short command to carry out his, Bondarevsky, as the head of the Special Department, instructions. He would look at Sazonov, this insignificant type with liberal manners, familiarizing with his subordinates! No if

he will be the boss, everything will be different for him! He will bring order here! And the look, full of deep hostility and confusion towards his boss, and the order that he held in his hands, was difficult to hide, and Sazonov enjoyed this spectacle. Then, quickly regaining calm and taking on seriousness, he explained to his "beloved" that by working on this order, one can distinguish himself; the selection of agents for off-line intelligence work is currently one of the main areas of counterintelligence work, extremely responsible and difficult to carry out these tasks, and is under the control of the head of the Smersh Main Directorate, Comrade Abakumov, and everyone is interested in fulfilling this order - from the division commander to front commander. And, wanting to sweeten the pill and cheer up the declining major, he added: "If everything goes well and with results, prepare, Alexei Mikhailovich, a hole for the order!" Bondarev somehow wryly and uncertainly smiled, but Sazonov realized that his ambition was hurt and now he would have to sit down to study cases, go to meetings with agents, get bogged down in coordination with other bodies and, mentally covering the complex of measures by order, he now was sure that Bondarev would not have time to wander to the political department to see Kuzakov. Contrary to Sazonov's assumptions, his deputy went directly to Kuzakov - he was simply

bursting to share that he had received an important task and, having filled the fog, to tell that his boss was frightened and would not be able to cope with the execution of one very important order received from the Center, and he instructed him to Bondarev, and added that he would be immediately awarded the Order of the Red Banner after the implementation of his plan of action. Well, not keeping the state secrets safe, he laid out to Kuzakov the content and purpose of the order. Repeating the operational vocabulary borrowed from his boss, he made an impression on Kuzakov of a real Chekist counterintelligence officer. And then they discussed for a long time the question of how to mark a positive image of a counterintelligence officer in a political report. They spoke almost without hiding, and the door to the office was not fully closed. When they began to leave through the dressing room, an officer was sitting there, and he had papers on the table. Bondarev asked Kuzakov who he was and what he was doing. Kuzakov was somehow shy, explaining that this was his again.

the assigned instructor, a former teacher of Russian language and literature, is busy collecting materials and assisting Kuzakov in writing the report.

Chapter VIII. STROKE TO THE PORTRAIT OF THE COMMANDER

Before lunch, Sazonov had to meet with the chief of staff of the division, Lepin. As was customary, they met three times a month with little conspiratorial subterfuge. The day before, Sazonov called Lepin and confirmed his readiness with a conditional phrase. In turn, Lepin also answered with a prepared phrase. All this was done to camouflage from the pervasive telephone fraternity - signalers. They were the first who voiced, gave out hints, omissions about the internal life of the division, and were aware of the movements and appointments. They fought with this, punished, but curiosity took over! The meetings were held in three places: at the secretary of

the division, in the cartography department and at the communications center. Lepin visited all these places every day, and the rendezvous with the special officer of the division was not evident to anyone. Sazonov was also allowed to come to Lepin's headquarters, but he did not want to sow unnecessary talk with his visits. The chief of staff

carefully carried out the secret directive of the General Staff on interaction with the Special Departments. Only through him could Sazonov conduct the movement of his secret army for operational purposes: connect or, conversely, separate development facilities, make new appointments, arrange a business trip to the rear or to neighbors on the right and left to exchange combat experience, send the right officer to the Shot courses. All this was in charge of the operational department of the headquarters, but the chief of staff

had the last word. Sazonov's headquarters had several agents from security sergeants of secret office work, cartography, courier service and

a communications center. From time immemorial, it was accepted that the head of the Special Department himself was in charge of the counterintelligence support of the headquarters. In those days when Guskov was the head of the department, the whole staff trembled at his appearance, except for Lepin, who was always smart, respectful to everyone, but a pedant in the service. In his presence, the former chief special officer of the division was restrained and did not allow himself to use foul language.

involuntarily respecting the high professionalism and independence of the chief of staff. Guskov never managed to instill in him inner awe and servility to the authorities. This irritated him very much, and sometimes, when he came back after meetings with Lepin, he was indignant aloud: "I'll tell you, Sazonov, that I feel uncomfortable with this neat and sloppy attitude, and his conversation was civilized, but dry and incomprehensible. Here Budylin - she began - this is another matter: I obscene to him, he to me too - everything is clear right away, but these intellectual tricks and tricks are different for me, I don't

accept them! Sazonov, as a grateful listener, received indescribable pleasure from communicating with Lepin. It was interesting to talk with him, he knew and saw a lot. His past overseas work associated with the Intelligence Agency gave him the opportunity to know and compare from strategy to structural features many foreign armies. There, by the nature of his service, Lepin read many articles, reviews that revealed to the world the secrets of the battles that had died down, victories and defeats of the warring countries in the First World War. But at that time he was interested in questions of modern military thought. He felt a sense of pride that it was a graduate of the Moscow cadet Alexander School, a former participant in that German war with the rank of lieutenant, and now the Soviet Marshal Tukhachevsky, who wrote an article about landing troops using aircraft in offensive operations. He was pleased with the courage and scope of the author's thought. In fact, this is how a new military tool was born - landing troops. But in June the thirty-seventh, the marshal was arrested and a strict ban was imposed on his work, and his name was forgotten. And only after returning to Moscow and being on academic courses, Lepin was convinced how the command staff of the army had changed: first of all, he was younger. On his course, the bulk of the students were much younger than his age and, basically, precocious nominees - yesterday's chiefs of staff and regimental commanders, there were even battalion commanders, and they ended up here, on an academic course with the subsequent receipt of the post of chief of staff or division commander. The Red Army, spurred on by external events, was building up its forces: the number of divisions and regiments was growing, and they were commanded by middle command personnel. Here coincided the events of the previous landslide purge of the senior

commanders and new, almost pre-mobilization deployments of new formations and units. Young,

full of strength and perseverance to overcome the course of military science, proud that it was they who were to command brigades, divisions, they conscientiously pushed into themselves for twelve to fifteen hours such an amount of theory that was calculated not for half a year, but for two or three years. learning. Many of his fellow students lacked general literacy, so extracurricular classes in the Russian language were organized, and his entire course went there, except for Lepin. Where are they now, his classmates?! Many of them were the first to take the hit and ... disappeared into obscurity. And he has not yet been able to meet a single one of them at the front. And in his memory they stood before him as if they were alive, he remembered them by sight, and many by their last name

Some of them were capable and even talented. One of them is Pyotr Bukhontsov, a native of a family of Nerchinsk Cossacks, a former history teacher, with rare rowan marks on his face; cheekbones and eyes said that Buryats had also visited his family, and perhaps dashing horsemen from Northern Manchuria - the Bargins, who raided the border villages of the Transbaikalian Cossacks. Lepin had a weakness for people from the East, especially for Bukhontsov. The expanses of Mongolia, the endless steppe, hills and rare yurts of hospitable nomads were still alive in my memory. He spent several years there, helping the red cyrils[13] to master the basics of military science. And, looking at Bukhontsov, he recalled the steppe sunsets, the summer heat, snowstorms, half-sand, hunting trips, tea parties in the circle of Mongolian commanders. And when he got to know Bukhontsov better and found out that his mother was from a family of exiled Poles, it became clear to Lepin where this semi-Asiatic had such graceful hands, inherited and fixed by family upbringing delicacy in behavior. And Bukhontsov also impressed with his academic abilities. It turns out that three years earlier he graduated with honors from the Chita Pedagogical Institute and for the third year he studied Japanese on his own. He doted on Lepin and revered him as a father or older brother, he was always there and looked with loving eyes at his older friend. They were spontaneously akin to the love of the army, both were devoted to it and, not knowing why and for what benefits, they idolized it! No, they knew - they both loved to command, to receive orders and to obey! How

prayer, they remembered the words of the famous Russian commander; learn to obey, and then you will learn to command! Well, where are you now, young commander Bukhontsov, where and how are you being served?! After the course, he received an order for an internship in the Trans-Baikal Military District, then the war began, and now three years have passed since they met, but it seems like an

eternity has passed! Lepin sighed and pulled himself away from his recollections when he heard a knock on the door—Sazonov was standing on the threshold. It took Lepin a lot of time to get used to the special officer, but his antipathy towards the organs was gradually smoothed out, and it remained from the inclinations of Major Guskov to impose on him the role of a follower and attempts to influence him with pressure. But Lepin did not react to this in any way and chose the tactic of silence, giving the major the opportunity to speak, and, thus, their conversation went in the form of Guskov's monologue. He liked to teach everyone, but this did not work here. Several times the major tried to point out the facts of improper storage of documents, shortcomings in the communication center, but Lepin politely but firmly rejected all attempts to press him

and make him dependent. That's why Guskov didn't like Lepin. The chief of staff clearly imagined the capabilities of Major Guskov. But those times when any official could be declared an enemy of the people are over. And now Guskov himself was somewhat dependent on Lepin. According to the procedure for rewarding personnel, the signature of the chief of staff or his deputy completed this procedure. Here Guskov was absolutely powerless. Everything depended on Lepin: he had a whole arsenal of arguments at his disposal to prevent the award from an ordinary to a deputy division commander! And no force could force him to cancel his decision. The officers of the special department and its chief could receive an award from two hands: through their department for their counterintelligence exploits and for differences on the battlefield, in the combat formations of a battalion, company. Distinguished for the capture of real spies, saboteurs was not possible; there were few such cases in the active army. Exposure of criminals for theft of military and personal property, disclosure of facts of self-mutilation in order to evade military service, disclosure of cases of robbery and violence against the civilian population, according to the Smersh leader

participation in the combat formations of the battalion in the offensive - who would allow you to do this? This is not your forty-first year, when the combat letter was still the original, then such an initiative was approved, but now it's a different matter. To each his own occupation. If you are a shooter, then you have one goal, if a platoon commander, you have an occupation and a goal Others. And if the detective, the special officer with a pistol goes on the attack, then what will it be? They kill - there is no demand, you can write it off, but they hurt, how then can you unsubscribe and explain why the special officer flew into battle formation and was wounded during the

offensive ?! Here, expect only trouble from such "heroism"! Since the summer of forty-three, the fashion for awards began: they were worn both on weekdays and on holidays. Guskov wanted to add some other order to his Zvezdochka and the ZBZ medal[14] , which, perhaps, would have been the same as in other divisions, where the special officers subjugated command or were friends with him, but Lepin was strict he followed the instructions of the People's Commissariat of Defense for awarding, and maintained only official relations with Guskov. This forced Guskov to curse the chief of staff aloud, but only at the location of the department and in the presence of his own. He knew that the divisional commander and some of the army command were behind Lepin. When Guskov died near Smolensk, Sazonov was appointed head of the department, and Lepin looked at him for a long time. Sazonov was distinguished from Guskov by competent speech, the absence of general suspicion, tolerance and worldly good nature in his judgments on many issues. At such meetings, he told Lepin a lot about that underlying inner life, interests, opinions, moods of the bulk of the division. These short sketches, retellings, born in the soldier's environment, did not resemble those political department memos that the commander of the division and him had to read as a duty, and where, under the lively pen of the political department, a mass of happy, joyfully going into battle soldiers grew up, with the words on their lips: "For Stalin" and ready to die at any time for the cause of the party of Lenin-Stalin. The chief of staff knew by heart these stamped, bureaucratic phrases, their primitive turns. Hundreds of times repeated at party meetings and meetings, they have already lost their attractiveness, faded from frequent use, their soul has long since left, true, the pain, the suffering of military hard times. And Lepin put up with

the state of the division's personnel, and believed that in this difficult war, political education and political awareness were not superfluous in the army - they, like Smersh and the military tribunal, were the gears of a huge Coercion System. But hypocrisy, lies, distortion, distortion of facts and the use of unnecessarily cruel measures, in his opinion, were the work of the middle and lower levels of the executors of the System! No, he was wrong! In this ingeniously designed machine of suppression, performers of all levels could only play by its rules! The party generals of the System observed, controlled and corrected their rules with closed decrees, resolutions, orders ... And now, in the twenty-seventh year from its creation, they reached almost perfection, which made it possible to stand in single combat with a formidable enemy and turn him back. He, as a man of military persuasion through and through, believed that his duty was to fulfill all the Rules prescribed by the System, they led to Victory, and this was now for him, despite their costs, the main content of life! And now, looking at Sazonov, at his open face, light gray eyes, at two stripes for

minor injuries and the Order of the Red Star, I thought: here is another representative of the System and, of course, not the worst, and even a pleasant person to talk to. The chief of staff listened with interest to the results of the inspection of the state of emergency at the sniper position and led him to the layout of the area, where a ten-kilometer front of the division was depicted. Sazonov immediately recognized the left flank and began to explain the incident yesterday.

- You see, Alexander Pavlovich, here, from this high-rise, we could be seen as if on a silver platter, and of course, they invested us properly, if it were not for the wet lowland, then we would have been covered, and so we only got off with one dead, in memorandum - all the details ... Lepin took a notebook and made a few notes. Then they talked for a long time about what was happening in the division, and about the lack of junior officers, the meager food supply and the lice of the personnel. Sazonov spoke mostly - he listened to the chief of staff, occasionally asked questions and made notes. -

On the way to you, I met a familiar foreman from the 664th regiment, so listen to what he told me. - And Sazonov in detail, with details and in detail retold

heard. - Do not believe it, Alexander Pavlovich, today our soldier cannot sit still, damned insects are eating him. While the soldier walks, moves or sleeps, he does not notice them, but as soon as he sat down in the warmth, they go on the offensive and begin to move. And now in the dugouts and dugouts the main occupation of the soldiers is the fight against them, the damned. And they do everything: they crush and burn linen on the stove, roll it with bottles, pour gasoline on it, but nothing helps. It can be seen that this handicraft will not help the cause - sanitary checkpoints are needed here so that all linen and clothes are steamed. In the transport company at Samsonov's, they decided to make their own lice flare: that is, they sewed a double tent, put up a stove, hung uniforms and linen on poles, and began to wait for everything to steam. But no luck for the poor fellows! The stove was heated, it was hot around it, and cool in the corners. Then they threw in more wood - the stove turned white; then suddenly one pole with clothes fell on the stove, and in an instant it blazed, and there was no tent, and thirty pairs of uniforms and underwear were gone! And those who handed over their uniforms in the roast are sitting naked in the dugout - no one had a spare. They would have stayed like that until spring, but thanks to the deputy for the rear, Budylin, he found some clothes from his reserves, cursed everything and threatened to give everyone to the tribunal for such

sabotage. Lepin remembered China: there the Chiang Kai-shek army had its own Chinese laws. For each louse found during inspection - one hit with a bamboo stick. The corporals raged. They were responsible for the salaries of the sanitation of the soldiers. But this was China, it was warm there, but here, in the division drowned in the snow, in the forest, far from the villages, neither to wash nor wash. And the sanitary checkpoints were requested a long time ago, but they were not sent to the Western Front - it is on the defensive. Now all the supplies go to the south: shells, mines, tanks, vehicles and replenishment of people, the most trained, skilled - they are advancing there, and we are inmates, and in the General Staff they think that we will get through somehow, we will overcome ... It was a shame that their front deprived of everything - from oats to shells for artillery. All this only flashed through the mind of the chief of staff, but he did not even want to say it aloud to Sazonov. And why poison yourself and someone else with complaints, you won't help this matter! And he found encouraging words, spoke of examples of nobility in the line of du

Sazonov could listen for hours to instructive stories from his past service, the German war, about his colleagues.

Lepin's memory was remarkable for dates, surnames, positions, and the language was short, like a combat report, lively and colorful, like a poster. Well, how would he know and who would tell him, the special officer, that the British and French do not have Special departments in divisions at all. There, this service is headed by an officer with the rank of captain. And in the regiment, its commander is responsible for everything, and all work on observation, study of personnel, investigation of misconduct in violation of the charter, as well as criminal offenses, is carried out by sergeants who have undergone special training. The commander has the funds to organize control over the privates, junior officers and civilians in the garrison of the regiment. But the court of officer honor regulated everything that related to the duties, rights, honor, dignity, morality and behavior of officers in the service and in everyday life. And he thought about what the chief of staff was saying, and comparing - he was amazed! It turned out like this: instead of a department, they had an officer and several sergeants there. And it turns out that their officers are beyond suspicion, they are not developed, they are not recruited. We are all different. Trust - no one, up to the division commander. An officer sneezed, and you should know about it, write it down and put it in a letter file, and the second time it will happen to him - you can start a case and bring information under it, agents. That's how it was with political instructor Volkov. He remembered: if his boss had talked sincerely with the political instructor, explained, warned, otherwise he set up various traps from his entourage: he taught them how to call him to a frank conversation and how to start a dispute so that he was all frankly laid out. And he, like a naive Shkolyar, was glad that he was being listened to so attentively. Eh! If only he knew that a net was thrown over him, like a goldfinch, and he was under the supervision of a master of detective affairs! If Sazonov had been the head of the department then, he would have saved Volkov from arrest. On the other hand, he did not represent the division without his department. "Mansions" appeared along with the Red Army. And she was used to them and their top-secret work. Maybe some deafly hated this service, but most were afraid, and hence the respect for it. Well, how can

his words: "Sazonov, don't be mumbling - beat your own, strangers will be afraid."

Chapter IX. FATE OF PRISONERS OF WAR

There were legends among the people about the cruelty and mercilessness of the organs after the shooting thirties. And the Army Special Department before the war, and during the war personally from the Leader, called "Smersh", inherited a lot and, most importantly, great agility for reprisal - a little something and up against the wall! And when in the summer of forty-second the order of the Leader No. 00227 was issued, then all the arrests of commanders who "arbitrarily" left their combat positions were assigned to special officers, and only then the tribunal stamped out sentences! Well, how can you not respect special officers!

Such thoughts sometimes visited Dmitry Vasilyevich, and he did not always find answers to many questions. And only one person in the division could give an answer, explain, explain the nature of many phenomena. Alexander Pavlovich Lepin knew a lot, the systemic stock of knowledge allowed him to draw parallels, compare and give a clear and understandable explanation. He knew perfectly well the military history of old Russia, victories, defeats and reforms, but no one ever heard from him a single word of condemnation against the collapse of the imperial army after February the seventeenth. He had his own opinion on this matter, and it differed greatly from the current official one, the only one for everyone, set out in a short course on the history of the CPSU (b). Lepin was oppressed by intellectual loneliness, and, oddly enough, he found in Sazonov an attentive listener, an intelligent, tactful interlocutor. They trusted each other not only out of mutual sympathy, but also out of duty. The proximity of the front, the upcoming battles and the responsibility for the fate of the division brought them closer.

And now, after discussing pressing issues, as he said, for the gymnastics of the mind, Alexander Pavlovich, analyzing the rights and duties of unit commanders in accordance with the new charters that came into being during the war, extracted from his extensive memory examples of in which countries and how the code was created military administrative rights and duties of the unit commander. From them, Dmitry Vasilievich learned that the commander of a battalion of the British army had the right, without the sanction of the War Ministry, to make an inquiry to his

parliament and get an answer on the question of interest to him. Using his power, he could decide to confiscate captured trophy property. And the most important thing that struck Sazonov was that on the basis of the Hague Convention of 1907, just think, he, the battalion commander, was given the right to carry out the exchange of prisoners of war on conditions that did not humiliate the honor of the royal troops! If he had learned

this from anyone else, he would not have believed it, but it was Lepin who said it! And then Dmitry Vasilievich, in turn, told how in the fall of forty-one, retreating to Kalinin, anti-aircraft gunners contrived and knocked out a Messer in the area of \u200b\u200ba neighboring division. The plane landed on its belly in a swamp, and the Red Army soldiers grabbed a whole, without a single scratch, no longer young, with a gray-haired pilot. And when they unbuttoned the overalls, they gasped - the whole chest was in orders and crosses! The next morning, the Germans, through a radio installation, requested parliamentarians for negotiations in order to exchange this pilot for one hundred of our captured Red Army soldiers. It turned out that the pilot was their hero and aviation ace! The division commander sent his adjutant to negotiate, but the special officers called the army headquarters, and from there the order was to stop negotiations with the enemies, but the division commander with the adjutant was taken away a couple of days later; and perished. And then there was an order for the army - a complete ban on negotiations.

Alexander Pavlovich, almost in a teacher's tone, gave Sazonov a short lecture in response. - It is

regrettable to hear such a story, but I must admit, the division commander made the wrong decision. Of course, judging by conscience and morality, he was right. A hundred people to change for one is noble and profitable. But this is a layman's decision. The exchange of prisoners requires: a brief truce and a ceasefire, and these procedures are carried out only with the knowledge of the state, and here a private commander's initiative is inappropriate! And our army is still young - of a revolutionary nature, it has not yet provided for the norms and rules for such a situation, and its military doctrine was mainly offensive. - Well, after a little silence, he added: - By the way, a similar situation happened with the current British Prime Minister - Churchill. During the Anglo-Boer War, he was captured, but the battalion commander wanted to exchange him for four captured Boers, but ... he did not have time, the future prime minister himself heroically escaped from captivity. AND,

I believe, - here he looked at Sazonov with a grin, - he was not subjected to cross-examination in counterintelligence - he was simply awarded a medal by his own command. "The facts of

rewarding for escaping from captivity, for leaving the encirclement are also unknown to me," Dmitry Vasilyevich looked at Lepin, sighed with regret and continued: prisoners, and we developed an instruction based on it through special departments, so it was generally provided that all military personnel, without exception, who were surrounded by the enemy for more than three hours, underwent a special check in filter camps ...

And further Sazonov did not continue, but could tell Alexander Pavlovich on this subject much of what he saw and heard about the filter camps in the front line. True, he was only in

one of them, on the territory of the Kalinin region. I came there to carry out an identification using a photograph of one commander who had previously served in their division and was missing. Sazonov was surprised that the territory of the PFL was surrounded by two rows of barbed wire, and the sight of its inhabitants amazed him; dressed in some rags, emaciated faces. And I also learned that their feeding was very poor: once a day, a gruel of frozen potatoes and four hundred grams of bread. All campers were taken under escort to peat extraction on foot, seven kilometers away. I remembered the interrogation of the

former battalion commander, thirty-four years old, with a toothless senile face and some kind of guilty look in his dull eyes. He, after graduating from the Kharkov Infantry School, in the early thirties served in the garrisons of different cities. He was taken prisoner three months after the start of the war. I was in a German camp for almost a year, fled and wandered around the villages and farms for half a year, hiding from the local policemen. During the summer offensive last year, he met his liberators, was immediately interrogated by a special officer and sent for a special check, which dragged on for three months. In a quiet and somehow guilty voice, he then asked Sazonov: "Comrade senior lieutenant of state security, of course, I understand ... and agree with the check, because enemies can get here under our guise, but I can't understand why we are all considered traitors here ?! We are here as being checked and so far not judged by anyone, but in

They don't let you out of the camp to the village or to the village, and they don't give you any leave, they don't allow correspondence, and for two years now my family hasn't known where I am. Now it would be just right to please them that he was still alive, because I have two young sons growing up there, "he

added with some sadness. Dmitry Vasilyevich was painfully ashamed to look into the eyes of this exhausted man, tired of his position, a former battalion commander who experienced death, pain and humiliation at the Germans and continues to endure obvious and covert mockery in our camp. And what could Sazonov say in consolation? Yes, nothing - keep silent and take a deep breath.

Various rumors circulated about our prisoners. Allegedly, the Supreme Commander said: we have no prisoners of war, only traitors are in captivity ... Maybe he did not say such words, but his iron comrades-in-arms in the party, expressing his attitude towards the fate of those millions who were mediocrely thrown under the inexorable rink of war, launched this poisonous, a hateful tale to the masses. This is where suspicion and contempt came from, and it acquired state power according to the formula where it is said that the masses, having mastered the idea,

become an irresistible force! The camp was guarded by the personnel of the personnel division of the NKVD to escort the prisoners. Officers in cornflower-blue caps - like a selection, young, with ruddy faces, tightened in belts. They and their soldiers treated their guards with hidden contempt. One morning, Dmitry Vasilievich saw how the head of the convoy, a young man dressed in a well-fitting overcoat, commanded a formation of former commanders and soldiers, many of whom were old enough for his fathers, and he, in a loud voice, accustomed to commanding an uncomplaining mass, shouted: "Stand in a column of four ! - and already unnecessarily suppressed and not thinking about resistance, with a hidden threat, commanding voice: - I warn you that unauthorized failure or lag on the route of movement will be stopped by the convoy, up to the use of weapons! - and drawlingly, singing every word: - Left shoulder forward, march to the exit! And the poorly dressed former army shuffled along, according to the old habit of the left, and, already behind the camp, in the depths of the column, someone unknown, cheerful voice with some kind of challenge and enthusiasm brou

the words of a pre-war military song: "Far Eastern, strong support, red banner, fight back," and the column unanimously picked up the chorus. For a long time after them rushed "red banner, you fight back" and disappeared behind the nearby forest. Then Sazonov thought: where, in what army can people sing who have passed severe trials and continue to endure obvious and covert mockery? They should be fed, clothed, encouraged with a warm, sincere word, each of them would fight for ten! ..

Alexander Pavlovich, as if reading his thoughts, replied: "Perhaps, after the victory, our attitude towards prisoners of war will change. As you know, the Germans spent a lot of effort and money on the environment of the "boilers" - it was dangerous to leave them in the rear. All that they pulled back was supposed to move the planned pace of the offensive. And each of our encircled groupings slowed down the adventurous plan of a lightning war. This is already evidence that the encircled did not raise their hands in front of the Germans, fought desperately, not sparing themselves, as only ours can

soldier".

This conversation unraveled Lepin's memory and he involuntarily continued to think about the German war, encirclement, prisoners, escapes from captivity and, among other things, mentioned Lavr Georgievich Kornilov, his escape from Austrian captivity, adding that after the captivity the general was promoted and he was proclaimed a national hero, and then he was a front commander and commander-in-chief, and captivity was not a dark spot in his biography. But he opposed the revolution and died, and yet he was a gifted officer, knew four languages, including Farsi, and was an expert in Southeast Asia! An amazing man sat in front of Sazonov: his strongly planted, with an elongated face, slightly touched by a noble gray hair, kept many interesting stories

about past events, and he spoke about them, as if thirty years had not passed, as if it were yesterday. And Dmitry Vasilyevich wanted to trust this smart man, express his opinion, share his thoughts on how he would deal with prisoners of war. - You understand, Alexander Pavlovich, what experience these commanders and soldiers have. No wonder there is a proverb "For one beaten

two unbeaten give! And, most importantly, the Germans did not consider them to be people - they were convinced of this for themselves and this will never be forgotten. And as for the lengthy checks in the filter camps, I think this is superfluous: it is impossible to expose a recruited agent under those conditions except by his personal confession or documentary data received from the Germans. - And encouraged by Lepin's genuine attention to his opinion, Sazonov, without haste, justified the uselessness of checking those released from captivity: - What do you think, Alexander Pavlovich, what are our organs most afraid of? - And without waiting for an answer, he said: - Penetration of enemy agents, but this requires appropriate conditions, which military operations cannot create. For example, the Germans decided to infiltrate a recruited company commander or battalion commander. So what?! To do this, you need to spend a lot of effort and money! First of all, in this case, maintain two-way communication with him. I think the game is not worth the candle. And the Germans are well aware of this, and they may also have fears that the recruited person will turn himself in when there is a channel for "misinformation" and operational games. And who will outplay whom here is unknown ...

- You convinced me, Dmitry Vasilievich, of the uselessness of checking in filter camps. Then tell me, what are they for? In that German Russia did without them, thirty years passed, and our people, as official propaganda says, became more literate and conscious, and suddenly test camps for encircled prisoners who had escaped from captivity ... - and already with subtle sarcasm, as if asking himself a question, he continued: — It would be interesting to know where the idea of filtering was born?! - He paused, got up, walked around the office and began to slowly answer his question: - It can be assumed that at the top they are exclusively busy with strategy, they have no time to deal with these issues, but the middle link of government determines tactical aspirations, and I am sure that it was there that this idea arose, and there it was clothed in a material form with calculations of when, where, according to the location, supply, regime, security, and everything else ... Sazonov was of the opinion that

the idea of strict rules for checking prisoners of war arose at the top. Reading countless orders, instructions, orientations, instructions along the Smersh line,

he became convinced that the whole policy of the bridle, the whip, the repressions for the rear and the front was at the very top and only in the firm and ruthless hands that created it. But he did not tell Alexander Pavlovich about it aloud. Then they discussed the latest news about the completion of the Korsun-Shevchenko operation in Ukraine, about the liquidation of the encircled enemy group, about eighteen thousand prisoners, and the assignment of the marshal rank to I.S. Konev. And already at the end of the meeting they expressed their assumption about the upcoming change in the name of their front and came to the conclusion that, most likely, it would be the 3rd Belorussian. By the way, this came true two months later, when in April Eastern Belarus turned into one impenetrable swamp after a snowy winter, and their front received a new name and a new commander.

The time was approaching for dinner, they said goodbye, and already on the threshold, Alexander Pavlovich, having invested a fair portion of

subtext, asked Sazonov: "Well, how does the friendship of the political department with Smersh continue?! I wonder how they find so much time for communication? From morning to evening your deputy sits in Kuzakov's political department. Maybe he went to work there? I believe that everyone should mind their own business, and organizing incompatible cooperations is unnatural and always to the detriment of the cause! - From this impromptu hint, it was clear that, by right of the eldest and by age, and by rank, Lepin wants to warn Sazonov in a friendly way about the inadequacy of the behavior of his subordinate and at the same time worries about the undesirable consequences of this union of two majors. And Dmitry Vasilyevich had to briefly outline the plan of how he decided to occupy his deputy.

He returned to the department in a good mood. Behind, at a distance of five steps - a connected soldier, as was customary from time immemorial, who accompanied his chief when he alone walked around the locations of parts of the division. At first, it was difficult for Sazonov to get used to the accompanying soldier, and he often asked himself why to tear the soldier away from business, occupation, rest: this soldier would hardly be able to protect his person from the attack of German intelligence officers; but then he agreed, and even felt uneasy when he did not hear his steps behind him. With a living person behind him, he had

it is easier to walk along the labyrinth of trodden paths, dive into juniper thickets, cross bridges, somehow laid through countless streams, ditches with black peat windows of water. Here, in these rotten places, perhaps, a liaison soldier is needed. Who, if not him, will cut down the pole

and support it when crossing the swamp along the slippery trunks of logs and poles lying in black water. And sometimes, to the right and left of the gati, open windows of black water came close - these are pits of bogs without a bottom and without an edge. Not only people were drawn in there - horses paired with a wagon were sucked in in a matter of minutes. These places were really disastrous for a person. Only two months ago they took up the defensive and hurriedly dug into the damp earth. But, as most often happened, they did it, as they say, without a king in their heads! If only to burrow into her, mother, and, forest, offended that she was disturbed, age-old, she began to send earth drops, and in the mornings water accumulated in the dugouts under the flooring, and the orderlies scooped out the peat slurry with kettles. From this dampness, the soldiers' weapons were covered with a touch of rust, their overcoats and quilted jackets did not dry out, at night they were coughing, painful boils appeared.

And only in the daytime, after chopping dry wood, they made fires in the depths under the fir trees, dried themselves, dozed, beat lice, wrote letters, cleaned weapons on ammunition boxes. Party organizers, Komsomol organizers and other political department activists pressed on the personnel with political talks, meetings, reading newspapers, taking advantage of the respite of the defense. It would probably be better if the political departments, with their vigorous activity, mobilized the entire sapper army, who knows the secrets of building in wetlands, then the dampness would not poison the already meager life of a soldier. And if the political department had noted in its reports that the food supply was completely impoverished, did not reach the norm and consisted mainly of concentrates and crackers - neither meat nor canned food was received by the division for the second month. Hence the disease: night blindness, bleeding gums, rapid fatigue, bad mood. Already in December, when the offensive stopped, they were eating up the meat of dead horses. And now the medical instructors forced all the personnel to drink coniferous infusion, they said that it was from scurvy. Soldiers obe

how their current life, drink, spat, cursed, but drank! A coniferous drink will not replace meat, but in the reports on the prevention of diseases, the medical service of the front will report to the Headquarters on the measures taken to improve the health of the personnel of the army in the field. As a man of conscience, Sazonov was struck by one thing - lies at every step, in all parts and services of the division. Take, for example, the head of the medical service, pot-bellied, red-faced Colonel Sivkov: in the morning a little drunk, in the evening he falls asleep with another woman from the medical battalion. His deputy, a sanitary doctor, writes for him reports to the front department about the excellent physical condition of the personnel, about weight gain, and the absence of diseases! And not a word about the fact that the I / s has become emaciated and has not received the front-line norm of meat and fat for a long time! If he writes about it, he will fall into the number of complainants, and then look, he may end up in the reserve, and then they will shove him into some garrison, and then there will be a rear ration, and the monetary content will be reduced by almost half.

Sazonov knew the medical officer of the division from time immemorial. According to the personal file, he received an offer to cooperate with the Special Department back in the Finnish campaign. Since then, as they say, a lot of official clothes and boots have been worn out, but every time, meeting with the special officer, Sivkov was worried, feeling like a mouse in the strong paws of the authorities. He especially felt this when he was a rude and foul-mouthed Guskov, after meetings with whom the deputy chief medical officer would definitely drink valerian and take a long time to come to his senses. Then Guskov made him head of the residency for the entire medical service of the division and assigned him the beautiful pseudonym Chapaev, and all informers and agents reported to him about their work. To tell the truth, this work brought also benefits. The medical service was one of the pillars of the combat readiness of the division's units, but along the way, through it, theft, abuse and deceit for the purpose of profit were revealed through it from the entire chain of command: more than a dozen medium and small supply chiefs were seized by the hand in various machinations. Dmitry Vasilievich, through Chapaev, first became acquainted with the methods of theft of valuable products in the division.

Chapter X. Plunder in the rear of the active army

After Kalinin was liberated from the Germans, in the winter of 1942, a request was sent to the Special Department from the Moscow Criminal Investigation Department, which indicated that during a search of the apartment of the arrested Kabanov, suspected of embezzling social property, they found about 100 kg of chocolate from the Krasny Oktyabr factory. According to the testimony of the arrested person, this chocolate was sent to him by the head of the PFS[16] of military unit 33972, Quartermaster of the 3rd rank Feofanov in exchange for a silver service, which was handed over to his wife, Feofanova M.N., who lives at the address: Moscow, Orlikov per., d. 8, apt. 10. At the

end of the request - a request to confirm the established fact. During the inquiry, it was revealed that by order of the Red Army in the food supply, a flexible system for replacing products according to a special table was established. And all the main products: bread, sugar, meat, fish, canned food, cereals, pasta, vegetables and many other products were interchangeable according to this table according to the calorie count. It was this interchangeability that was the main skate on which the PFS rode. The rear service always stole food, at all times and under all regimes! In the Red Army, this vile occupation continued on a large scale under the protection of the Party and the state, and on a small scale - thanks to the lack of control, imperfection of accounting and dishonesty of individual food foragers. The words of the commander Suvorov "the quartermaster after a year of his service can be hanged without trial" could be put into practice at that time, and the army would have been

completely left without this nettle seed! But without any supplies! Sazonov, not without difficulty, managed to delve into the ingenious combinations of the PFC. And they made it very easy. And Chapayev, smoking

cigarettes one after another, told Dmitry Vasilyevich about their secrets. "Imagine that the division's food warehouse did not receive meat on a certain

fish, and if it is not there, then you can replace it with various canned food. According to the substitutability table, it is allowed to replace meat with sausages, hams and other valuable meat products. But what quartermaster would agree to give hard-smoked sausage or a ham instead of meat to a common soldier's cauldron?! He will break into a cake, but will give out to the personnel the stale pink salmon, which he had in stock. Then, in hindsight, he will write off the low-quality fish under the act (and it has already been eaten), and write in the invoice that the personnel received sausage as allowance. Thus, he has a surplus of 250–300 kg of sausage! And what to do with this product, because they can catch! It is necessary to establish sales, and without the help of a higher commissariat, this cannot be done! After all, it makes applications for transport and carries whatever your heart desires, from the front to the rear with security documents. In addition, - Chapaev continued, encouraged by Sazonov's attention, - such combinations are also possible because the food service, taking into account combat losses, simply does not provide food, and there is no control from above, so there are surpluses of canned meat, bacon, sugar, and they " attach

legs "to the rear! Step by step, Sazonov promoted this chocolate story. It turns out that the division received a parcel from the capital's candy factory, as having distinguished itself in the December battles while saving Moscow, - more than 100 kilograms of chocolate. The Deputy Divisional Commander for the rear gave a written order: to— distribute 200 grams to the commander's additional rations [17] . The chief food officer of the division, Feofanov, hid the invoice indicating the deputy division commander, replaced the chocolate with soy candies, which was issued for additional rations. No one would have known about this if his old acquaintance in trade, Kabanov, had not come to the attention of the Moscow criminal investigation department. As expected, Sazonov conducted surveys of frightened storekeepers, a freight forwarder, and a driver. All of them testified that the cargo in the amount of six plywood boxes was lying in the warehouse, then, at the direction of Feofanov, it was loaded onto a truck from the transport company and, accompanied by a forwarder, was sent to Moscow. The cargo was left there, the car with the forwarder returned to the unit. Vouchers indicating the amount of cargo with the corresponding signatures were con

it was interesting to know what he would say about how chocolate got to Moscow. But it was not possible to interrogate Feofanov. Upon learning that his subordinates had already visited the Special Section, he shot himself that night. Most likely not remorse, but Sazonov experienced annoyance about this. He had many questions for the deceased. And here, at the front, no one mourned the quartermaster, no one regretted that he had sentenced himself too harshly. If he had left himself alive, the division tribunal would most likely have determined by his sentence: a penal battalion - a private, where he was destined to be killed in battle or wounded. Then the whole crime would be washed away with the first blood, he would return to his food service in his former rank, and the story with chocolate would become a nightmare in his life. But fate decreed differently, saving him from many experiences.

Such a series of memories arose from Dmitry Vasilyevich when traveling on foot through the locations of the units of the division that had already become his native. He only left her twice because of minor wounds: the first time a fragment of a mine hit his thigh, the second time he was shell-shocked during the bombing; he was lucky: the wounds were light, he rested in hospital cleanliness, warmth, and again without any delay - in his rifle, darling, but it could have been otherwise.

So imperceptibly the captain with his liaison approached the large the edge of the forest, where the main transport forces of the division were quartered. Already at the approach to the edge of the forest, there was a smell of smoke from fires, horse manure, harness, tar, and food. They passed two bustling field kitchens with two cooks in quilted jackets and filthy aprons; past a field smithy, where under a shed stood a marching forge with bellows, an anvil, a horse shoeing machine, and a gray colt mare tied there alone; We approached the dugout where the commander of the transport horse-drawn company, Captain Samsonov, quartered. He sat at a clean, scraped table and wrote something. By the stove, built of bricks, on a couch, sat a foreman with a cat in his arms. At the sight of Sazonov he got up briskly, throwing the cat from his knees.

Samsonov, an old-timer of the division, a pleasant little peasant of small stature, with a lush reddish mustache, a former collective farm chairman, greeted Sazonov hospitably, with a broad smile. A few minutes later there was a copper kettle on the table; the foreman, pouring tea, withdrew with Sazonov's liaison, leaving them alone. Thrift

Samsonov and his stinginess in everything were known to the entire division. In the company, he had an ideal order: paired lines, gigs, trucks and several carts with traveling radios were exemplary. The horses were shod well. In his field forge, he picked up high-class specialists. He had one fitter from Kharkov, so he could do everything: from repairing a machine gun to repairing diesel engines. How many times they tried to transfer him from the company to the workshop of the artillery regiment, but each time Samsonov personally went to the deputy division commander along the rear and beat him out of the hands of the artillerymen.

They even promised to immediately give him the rank of foreman, but he did not agree to the promises and remained in the company with the rank of corporal.

When asked by Sazonov why the personnel were not visible, Samsonov replied that all the people were on Lake Sulemy, from where they were trying to pull out the goods drowned by the Germans. No one knows how it happened, but during their retreat, a column of cars lost its way and went to the lake, which they tried to cross on the ice, but the first cars immediately fell into the water, and the column turned around and went back without trying pull the trucks out of the lake. Samsonov's soldiers, having discovered the drowned transport, developed a vigorous activity to pull it out of the lake. Finishing his story, Samsonov invited Dmitry Vasilyevich to see how

the lifting work was going: "Today is a decisive day - yesterday we finished fixing the wooden winch gate." A few minutes later the two of them got into a small sleigh, the red-haired horse sped off and, diving over the small potholes of the well-worn road, ten minutes later brought them to the shore of the lake. There was a lot of work here. Two fires were burning; the soldiers gathered near the drum with the collar, fitting hefty stakes to it. Encouraged by the glances of the arriving officers, this gang of people, driven by keen curiosity - what the Germans were carrying in trucks - and the desire to profit from something (it would be nice to find schnapps or wine in beautiful bottles), began to work even faster! Here, creaking and crackling in the arms of the iron cable, the drum began to rotate more slowly, the cable stretched and rang alarmingly like a string. Several soldiers rushed to help, when suddenly, on a flat surface of the water, the top of the tent of the truck, black from the water, began to appear, then its sides and already through the stream of water, it was visible

rear wheel suspension. When the blunt limber came out of the water and crossed the coastal strip of water, the gate stopped its rotation, the soldiers shouted "Hurrah." Dmitry Vasilyevich was captured by the elemental impulse of the soldiers and also shouted with them and their commander. And then they opened the tent: the body of the car was littered with boxes. They took out the first metal one at random, threw back the latches, opened the lid, and there ... thick, hand-filled magazines, soaked with water. They called someone who knew German - he turned out to be a company veterinarian with a Jewish appearance. He read the magazine for a long time, another, a third, then looked into the folder, the second,

the fifth in a row ... - This is a record of the dead and a description of the places of burial, copies of funeral certificates sent to the relatives of the dead, - the veterinarian explained. An involuntary feeling of respect arose in Sazonov for his sworn enemies. After all, you must! They - the Germans - carefully record when, where and under what circumstances death occurred, what was awarded, who presented the award and where they were buried, indicating the topographic coordinates of the burial and the name of the chaplain who served the prayer service

during the burial. And each of their soldiers knows: if he is killed in battle, his relatives and friends will be informed where and when it happened and in what place his remains are buried - this to some extent calms him (he will not be forgotten!) and gives confidence that the comrades from the funeral team will do everything according to the established ritual and he, as a respectable Christian, will have his personal cross on the grave. If you look at it, this is respect for the individual, because the victim was dear to someone, he was loved like a son, father, husband! And it does not exist, but there is a human memory, it lives for a long time and warms the hearts of loved ones. And involuntarily, almost three years of the war came to life in my memory: the graves of our soldiers, mostly fraternal, where they lie, barefoot and undressed: shoes, padded jackets, overcoats - all this stuff was removed by the funeral team. It is interesting to know whose inhuman order it was to strip naked the dead?! If there is no respect for the dead,

there will be none for the living! With such gloomy thoughts, Sazonov silently got into the shrewd Samsonov, as it were, answered his thoughts:

- This is Europe, in a word, culture, - and whipped
twig of a red horse.

Chapter XI. SECRETS OF THE SAFE

An hour later, Dmitry Vasilievich was in his dugout and, with pleasure eating lunch delivered by an orderly from the officers' canteen, listened to his favorite sergeant Kalmykov. He reported that they called from the "Smersh" of the army - the check of their department was postponed for a week. Sazonov rejoiced at this news and thought that during this time it was possible to finally put the letter cases in order: to review the primary materials in them coming from information, to draw up certificates on some of them, to send part of the documentation to the archive - in general, a lot more can be done for week. He even cheered up and cheered up from this news. Then Kalmykov said that Bondarev came and ordered to bring him files of general correspondence and letter files for two rifle regiments, and was also interested in accounting for operational matters. - Well, what did

you answer him? - I

explained to him that, according to the instructions of the secret production, approved by the head of the Secretariat of the Smersh Main Directorate, Colonel Mamulov, all cases can only be examined indoors and in the presence of the secretary of the department. - And he? - He got

very

angry and began to shout at me - he threatened to drive me [18] I write a report to the field listened to this and told him that I would guardhouse about his unauthorized demands, exceeding his rights and violating the office work instructions in the department. After that, he jumped out the door, as if scalded, and I saw how he ran to the political department to Kuzakov.

Having laughed in his heart at Bondarev's obstinacy, Sazonov noted to himself that Kalmykov had become independent, had mastered this difficult area of work, and mentally thanked Lepin again for this reliable, hardworking and able to fend for himself assistant. Soon

Kuleshov called and asked to be seen in the sniper case. Sazonov was even ashamed: he completely forgot that this was a completely "green" operative and he needed help, that it was with him,

probably the first independent investigation. And he remembered his first things: ineptitude in interrogations, haste in conclusions, lack of ability to separate the main from the secondary, uncertainty in dealing with witnesses and suspects ... He made many different mistakes when he first embarked on the path of a special officer. But his conscience is clear - never, under any circumstances, he defiled himself with false testimony and postscripts and, contrary to the advice of his superiors, did not adhere to an accusatory bias, but tried to establish the truth. Kuleshov brought all the materials of the case, and

Dmitry Vasilyevich was even surprised at how competently and soundly he conducted the polls and face-to-face confrontations. Mentally praising Kuleshov, he imagined asking him: "Is this your first business, Sergey Vasilyevich ?!" He shyly nodded his head in response. "Well, that's not bad for a first investigation. Although Vaskov does not think to admit his guilt, it does not matter. And the confrontations confirm his guilt... And now write a conclusion on the case, I will sign it, and we will send the prosecutor of the division to conduct an investigation, and he will decide the fate of Vaskov. Looking into Kuleshov's gullible youthful face, with an open smile and a dimple on his chin, for some reason he was always sure that such a one would not let you down, would fulfill his duty in full and would not deceive the truth!

And, very pleased with such reflections, he went to an iron cabinet, called a safe, made in the art workshops to his order, with an intricate internal lock welded to the inside of the door. It was the repository of all his cases, documents that only he himself worked with. On the first shelf lay a bundle of letters from his sister Varya and a Muscovite trainee Zoya, whom he met in the hospital on the eve of the new, forty-three, year. There was also a silver medallion on a chain, presented by his beloved mother, in it were two strands of hair - hers and her father, who was killed somewhere near Riga in the summer of the seventeenth year. The medallion recalled the old story in the bathhouse with the unforgettable Guskov, when he looked suspiciously at the medallion and asked about the veneration of opium for the people. He did not listen to the fact that this was a memory of his parents and expressed himself obscenely that this long-maned contra had invented both crosses and medallions. And then he added: "You, Sazonov, are a counterintelligence officer, a member of the CPSU (b), and you don't fit

adopt bourgeois habits and set such an example for others!" On another shelf

was an officer's Parabellum in a leather holster and an album in a suede case with thin mother-of-pearl clasps. Both were obtained during a raid by a reconnaissance group behind German lines, when on a country road they blew up an Opel Captain with a grenade, in which, in addition to the killed driver, there was also an officer. He fired a pistol and killed a scout approaching the car, and then shot himself in the temple. The trophies came to the head of intelligence of the division, Major Khozankin, and before leaving for retraining, he presented them to Sazonov, who once saved a reconnaissance sergeant from a military tribunal for stealing alcohol. If the "parabellum" lay unnecessarily, then the album for Dmitry Vasilyevich was a page of communication with that noble and extraordinarily beautiful piece of Atlantis of the past. He never showed it to anyone, embarrassed by his compassion for that ruined world. None of his entourage understood and would not share his mood, looking at these faces of the pre-revolutionary era!

On the title page, it was calligraphically deduced that this album was purchased in St. Petersburg, on Morskaya Street, in Kuzmin's shop, in 1889 by Ms. Lyubomirskaya E.N. In the occasional free moments that fell out, he took the album in his hands and peered into the faces of women, men, old, young, children, rarely with a serious and almost always with an expression of a pleasant smile, as if they were sending a joyful blessing to their relatives and friends. The black and brown daguerreotype concealed wrinkles in the elderly, and made the young look angelic. Cardboard, with silver lilies in the margins and gold-edged pages, kept this bygone world in themselves. Sazonov did not know him, did not live in him, but subconsciously expressed sympathy for him. Only thanks to this album, where there were also business cards, postcards with congratulations on Christmas, Easter, embossed on good paper, with flowers, vignettes, with blue domes of churches, decorated with Christmas trees, turquoise, golden Easter eggs, he learned how time they rejoiced at letters, ancient holidays and meetings. From the postcards, one could find out who celebrated the New Year and where, who was expected to visit, who came to visit them. What kind of affectionate names did not call the hostess

album! And she, always and everywhere enthusiastic, with a bewitching smile, bright-eyed, looked point-blank at Dmitry Vasilyevich, and he experienced a feeling of unconscious guilt and reproach that he was holding an item belonging to her without asking and shamelessly examining her face, hands, bare shoulders, neckline and a slender figure at the gazebo arm in arm with an elegantly dressed man. Who was he to her? Husband, brother, uncle? Unknown. She silently smiled, and Dmitri Vasilyevich even became jealous of this dark-eyed man with a small beard in a frock coat. He looked at her, smiling only at her ... All these envelopes and letters with the words - dear, dear, beloved, Katenka, Katyusha, Kitenka - and many more such warm, cozy, homely words ended in March 1918; last postcard. A woman wrote, worried about the silence. What happened to Lyubomirskaya E.N., with her family, home? ... No one could tell. The faces inhabiting the album were smiling but silent. And Dmitry Vasilyevich was overcome by a feeling of inexpressible sadness, as from the loss of a loved one! And, repeating your favorite line about the frailty of life, "And what remains? Only

a blue mist that rises in the field from fire and ashes! "He hid the album in the depths of the safe. On the middle shelf, bound in leatherette, was another album. Unlike the first one, it was an official document received from the Smersh [19] for wanted persons suspected of crimes against the Soviet regime. Mostly men from 18 to 60 years old looked at Sazonov from the pages of the album. These were army commanders, political workers and occasionally civilians. Here one could trace the zigzag of many hundreds of bizarre destinies: honest service in the Red Army, prosperity, the flourishing of a career and, like a bird knocked out on takeoff, in the fall from the short June nights of forty-one, the panic of retreat, captivity and further fall. It was necessary to choose: to cooperate, to help, to be devoted to the new regime, to fight by any means against our own, or ... doom ourselves to starvation in a concentration camp. Almost everyone, with rare exceptions, loved life more than their own Red Army, and, not to mention the only socialist fatherland in the world, depressed by what had hap

a man is already arranged: his shirt is closer to his body than the interests of the Red Army, the CPSU (b), the state of workers and peasants!

In cheap leatherette, not only the tragedies of individuals were collected, but also the tragic mistakes of the leader and director, with the boundless power of the party Areopagus, his Leader and the entire system, which was on the verge of death! Opening the page of the search album with the letter "B", Sazonov saw looking at him from a photograph of a youthful, with an intelligent expressive face, Major General Bessonov L.N.), with a military academic background. He was captured under unclear circumstances, was sent by the Germans to Czechoslovakia, the city of Sedlice, where he was kept on the territory of a former monastery with generals and other persons from the commanding staff of the Red Army, where each of them was asked to compile an overview of the organization of various army services, up to counterintelligence . Bessonov also tried to organize a party of the so-called "new generation" among the prisoners of war, but the competing Vlasov movement absorbed his organization. Location unknown. Subject to detention and arrest. Sazonov peered into a pretty strong-willed face and thought: "Well, you, Comrade General, managed to get into such a story! This will not go in vain for you, my dear, and now your relatives will suffer for you up to the seventh knee! The wife and children will be sent to places, perhaps not remote, but they will immediately deprive them of the monetary allowance according to the certificate. It is almost impossible to get a job with such a motivation for expulsion, in general, lie down and die! .. "Further down the alphabet, a few more generals - and all with the addition "was captured under unclear circumstances." This is a hint of betrayal, and what is written with a pen can no longer be cut down, erased, and it will hang forever!

Well, even further, the unattractive physiognomy of Lieutenant General Vlasov in glasses. About him in the line of "Smersh" a detailed description has long been given - a more solid document compared to a short certificate over a photograph. There was a photo card for almost every wanted person in the album. They were looking at

Dmitry Vasilyevich, they were enemies: they went into the service of the Germans and, for the sake of preserving their lives, they killed, maimed their compatriots - one land, one way of life, where their ancestors were and their grandchildren

will live! In the history of the thousand-year-old state, there was a lot of inexplicable, unjustified cruelty, deceit, perfidy of rulers and their subjects, there were unrest, fratricidal wars, betrayals, betrayals, but the history of Russia has not known such betrayal, such a transition to the side of the enemy since the time of Rurik! In World War I, the Germans had more than one and a half million Russian prisoners of war, but not a single one of them was found who would voluntarily take up arms and begin to fight against their own people! And this, the third in a row, Patriotic War gave rise to hundreds of thousands of those who opposed the only native workers' and peasants' state! How did this happen as a result? Such questions could not arise in Dmitry Vasilyevich, but it could not and cannot be that someone in this country did not think about this phenomenon and did not conclude that the state was sick, and only the great patience of the people made it possible to withstand the bloody experiment of forcible retention power, which gave birth to many mortally offended, harboring revenge, evil and ready to fight with him when their fateful hour struck! One winter, when their division was in the second

echelon of the offensive, they went to the near-station, half-burnt village of Priluki and met a local resident, overgrown with a beard, on crutches, with a sled and a bag of frozen potatoes. He stood picturesquely, leaning on makeshift crutches, among the soldiers who surrounded him, and in a sonorous voice, rejoicing at the meeting and the fact that they were listening to him, he told a short but sad story of his native land: - So I say, our Priluki did not know this!

In 1941, when your comrades were retreating, the NKVD wanted to set fire to the village, but they didn't have time, but now we didn't survive, they burned us ... You ask, where are the people? And there are no men left. First, when the German came, about fifty people, together with the encirclement, went to serve the Germans, which means they went to the police, to guard the road and to other execution cases! .. Many then thought that the Soviet power was over, and the German was strong, and all around they said that Moscow and

Leningrad was taken, and Comrade Stalin, with the coffin of Comrade Lenin, seemed to have fled beyond the Urals. How can we know, dear comrade, what the provocateurs have invented?! I'm not saying that we all believed. Why blame us: there was no radio, no newspapers, so they lived on rumors ... Of course, there was some kind of hope that Russia would survive! And as for the traitor policemen, there were so many offended among them, and others out of stupidity, so they decided to get even with the authorities, and about forty people went to the partisans. So the split turned out: the Ents are for the Germans, and they are against! And, rolling his cigarette, he grunted resentfully under his breath: "If only you could live under the Germans for at least a week, if only you could find out how much a pound is worth ... If you leave the village, you need to have ausweiss [20] . And by nightfall, you won't even pass

through the village: the policemen darted through the streets, through the yards - the partisans were looking for these underminers on the "piece of iron". Dmitry Vasilyevich for some reason remembered this one-legged peasant, his unpretentious arguments about the split among the inhabitants of this primordially Russian hinterland. "And if you figure it out, then, read it, with the civil,

collectivization and Yezhovshchina, every third was offended. Here it is, resentment and got out when the power weakened, "he noted to himself. But there were also those on the wanted list who made their betrayal a profitable craft. Sazonov selected from the search album information on all persons who served with the Germans in the occupied territory. There were many of them, different in age and in their past: there were military men, civilians of various professions - from a collective farmer, an accountant, a police officer to an instructor of the district party committee and former criminals. But one of them, in his skill and scope of bloody deeds, was worth two dozen policemen, burgomasters and other small fry, cowardly serving the new order. It was a real leader wolf - cunning, resourceful, stubborn in achieving the goal and at the same time resourceful and daring, but in general it was a real nugget of intelligence and counterintelligence. He was well known to the head of the Abverstelle [21], Major Gluknauz, who had been inseparably from the autumn of 1941 at the headquarters of Army Group Center, in the village of Krasny Bor near Smolensk. The wanted man was twice awarded by the Germans and received honorary citizenship for services to the Reich. Sazonov learned all this from the search certificate

watching him, almost smiling, was a young man with an inconspicuous face, in a uniform with buttonholes, a jacket and with a very even parting of his hair, almost in the middle of his head. So Sazonov, through an official document, met Lisovetsky Andrzej Yanovich, a Pole, a native of Grodno, twenty-five years old, with a secondary medical education.

Only Kalmykov, as secretary of the department, knew how many requests Sazonov sent out in order to find traces of Lisovetsky. The incoming information, of course, confirmed that he was in the territory occupied by our troops during the summer-autumn offensive of the Western Front. And since then there is no information about him. From the partisan headquarters of Ponomarenko came a detailed memorandum from the development of representatives of German intelligence and security agencies, which indicated that Lisovetsky, aka Adamchuk, aka Tkachev, the head of the anti-partisan group, according to partisan agents, had not been through intelligence reports since August 1943 partisan detachments of the Smolensk-Orsha direction. The partisan headquarters refrained from any assumptions regarding the possible reasons for the disappearance of Lisovetsky. But the "Sudoplatov economy" [22], having more complete information, — , suggested that the wanted man, in all likelihood, was left with his group to carry out espionage and sabotage acts on the Western Front, and recommended (there was a usual set of general "Enkavedesh" measures): to strengthen, expand, deepen, check ... And to agree on all questions on the search for Lisovetsky-Adamchuk, contact Major Kurakin from the Smersh Directorate of the Western Front. Sazonov only partially agreed with the assumption of the 4th Directorate. He thought that the Abwehr was

unlikely to leave such a "specialist" as Lisovetsky in these places. They desperately needed him in Eastern Belarus to eliminate partisans, special squads, and the safety of the railway. And for sabotage in the front line, the Germans could leave someone simpler - from the local policemen, who had nowhere to go: in front of the bullet, and behind - the gallows! All the materials of the search case said that Lisovetsky had disappeared without a trace. But in the material world there are always traces.

Their only

must be looked for carefully. And Sazonov persistently continued the search for the wanted man. One day he received an answer from the transport department of the NKVD on the Smolensk railway. They found two people who knew the person wanted by sight and saw him in early August. One of them is a railway worker, and the second is a woman, a former guerrilla liaison officer, a switchman at the Installation junction. So she said that she saw Lisovetsky several times at the station, and for the first time he arrived on a motorized rubber, which testified to his belonging to the authorities, accompanied by one military German, in uniform, and an armed policeman with an armband. A cart with a driver was waiting for them at the station. Lisovetsky left with him, and the policeman and the German went up to the lineman's booth, where there was a switchman, and asked for water. She heard how the German ordered the policeman to meet Mr. Lisovetsky in two days and accompany him to Smolensk. External signs of Lisovetsky, described by the former partisan liaison, converged completely: a slender, lean figure, a parting in her hair and blue eyes. Then she saw him several more times at the station, and each time he came with

someone, and left alone, in the same britzka, with the same bay horse. How many questions arose: why did Lisovetsky come to this deaf siding and where did he mysteriously disappear on the britzka ?! At first, Sazonov assumed that this was a secret meeting with agents. But night time would be better suited for this; why should he go here in front of many, because it is more expedient for the agent to come to him and in safe conditions conduct a briefing over a glass of schnapps. And if he went to meet with his group, settled somewhere in a secluded place, hidden

from human eyes? According to the materials of the search, there were five people in his group - three Russians and two Lithuanians. The appearance of five able-bodied men, not hiding from the local police, would surely spark rumors in the area. This version, despite its absurdity, needed to be checked. Mentally thanking the Sazonov transport operatives, think about how to set out to the local authorities the task of finding traces of Lisovetsky. Dmitry Vasilyevich imagined that the wanted man had many roads, a head start in time, the possibility of disguise, and he needed to choose the only one, but the right one, to find him, while sophisticated on

became

the inventions of the evil genius did not prepare new bloody deeds, did not draw in, insidiously did not deceive the inexperienced, gullible on their way.

Sazonov took out a large-scale map, calculated how far a horse could travel in one light day, wrote out the settlements that were in this district. Then he made a written assignment for a business trip, and the next day two of his operatives drove in passing cars in the direction where Lisovetsky hid the secret of his visits.

And he also imagined how the people live in the newly liberated regions of the Smolensk region, where he sent his eagles. The dark belly of dugouts, dugouts adapted for habitation, smoky oil lamps filled not with kerosene, but with gun alkali. Hunger and cold, and wow - all the requests sent to those parts by his department were executed sensibly and on time, although in handwritten text, bad ink, and on sheets of office books, and in home-made envelopes, but they answered on the merits, with a sense of responsibility for the execution of the order of the army "Smersh".

So, gradually, information from eyewitnesses, unwitting witnesses began to come to the wanted man about the capture of partisan, special detachment intelligence officers, messengers, and the disclosure of safe houses. Moreover, many of them said that Lisovetsky himself often personally participated in the arrest and at the first interrogations of those arrested. But everything that was collected on Lisovetsky was only a small fraction of what actually belonged to him. If Sazonov knew about this, he would redouble his zeal in his search. But if he knew why Pan Lisovetsky became an implacable enemy and what made him choose such a deadly path, then he might have thought about such a fate, but he would hardly have expressed sympathy - service in German intelligence, like an anti-tank ditch, separated them from each other! And in order to understand this better, you need to know or at least assume the private life of a former inhabitant of Western Belarus.

Chapter XII. HOSTAGE OF TWO SYSTEMS

He was born in 1919 in Grodno. The country had been a republic for a year now, and his father, an ardent supporter of its "independence", a former lawyer, was appointed mayor. In 1938, Andrzej graduated

with honors from the medical assistant's school and, after two years of practice, was preparing to enter the medical faculty of Warsaw University, but then the war broke out. He was mobilized and, with the rank of warrant officer, received the medical unit of the sapper battalion of the infantry division. But there was no need to fight the Germans - Warsaw fell, resistance was useless. Their commander ordered the dismantling of food and clothing stocks and disbanded the battalion. All weapons, so as not to hand over to the Germans, were buried. And they silently dispersed to their homes in the autumn slush, in groups and alone, not needed by anyone, not indebted to anyone! He, with three privates called from the same street, moved home. Already on the way we learned that the Soviets also opposed Poland. They were at home two weeks later. The father silently hugged his son, his sister, old aunt Rosalie, wept, anticipating what awaits them ahead.

And twenty days later, on the outskirts of Grodno, the Red Army deployed two cavalry regiments in the former barracks of the Polish Army, and their horse patrols patrolled the hushed city at night. Officers and soldiers in cornflower-blue caps with a red band appeared on the central streets. Arrests began at night. The first to be arrested were wealthy people of a bank - a commercial bank and an agricultural city, the owner of two textile factories with his managers, shops. two directors and a dozen other owners of various Then representatives of the authorities, police officers and even the inspector of educational institutions of the city were arrested. Andrzej's father was also among those arrested. He was taken at work and taken under escort to the city prison, where all the respected people of Grodno were already gathered. In vain, Lisovetsky Jr. sought clarification from the commandant's office about the reasons for his father's arrest. They listened to him and began to reassure him that in

In prison, there are not arrested people, but those detained to test their loyalty, that they should be released immediately. Many believed this and began to wait patiently. Then the city announced the registration of all former soldiers mobilized before and after September 1, 1939. Registration was held in the building of the commercial school, in the assembly hall. In the courtyard, he saw dismounted cavalymen and horses tied along the fence. It seemed suspicious to him that there were so many armed men in the yard. He immediately went to the water closet, jumped out the window into the square of the courtyard and reached the house through the alleys, collected all the necessary things in his old Boy Scout backpack and, hastily explaining to his aunt that they might be looking for him, went to his father's friend, the old bachelor Iosif Zagursky, who was still in tsarist times a justice of the peace. They talked all night. In the morning we learned that everyone who came to register had been detained, and they were escorted to prison at night.

The city, oppressed by force and threats of arrest, suffered in silence. The internal radio network was silent, telephones did not work, newspapers were closed. They gathered to those who had radios, listened to Moscow, Berlin, London, but everyone was not up to the fate of the inhabitants of Western Belarus, and those now illegally seized were sent echelon after echelon to the East. The market was deserted, there was no work, and the man in the street thought with horror how he would survive this winter. It became dangerous to live with Pan Zagursky. An employee of the newly organized militia visited the father's house twice,

the aunt explained that the nephew had gone to Warsaw. Once, hiding from the rain, he went into the educational building of his school. The porter, the kind invalid Matyushko, was gone. The doors are open, there is dead silence in the building and the dust of desolation ... But once life was in full swing here: what evenings there were, masquerade balls. The future tribe of young Aesculapius lived not only with boring lectures. How Andrzej wanted to return this time, not to see impudent cavalymen, not to hear horseshoes clattering through the streets, not to meet them and not to hide from this pack of "Enkavedeshniki" in carpeted tunics with sleeve chevrons - a sword in a wreath, not to hear their laughter on the open veranda of the only, which remained open in the city of the resta

confident, belted, their well-fed faces, the servility of the inhabitants in front of them! By the way,

now it has become dangerous to live in rich mansions: in broad daylight, in front of all the honest people, the NKVD officers with the new police forcibly expelled their inhabitants and occupied the mansions with their families. Some houses were simply sealed with all furnishings and property as a reserve for the new horde. Andrzej quietly

walked along the deserted corridors of the school and went behind the stage of the assembly hall: old mirrors darkened by dust, two small make-up rooms ... He remembered the graduation party of the thirty-eighth year, the anniversary - the Republic turned twenty years old! He participated in an amateur performance, the role was small, but everyone noted his game: subtly and truthfully, he played an old, lame servant - a former soldier. Looking into the closet, he found there wigs, false beards, mustaches and, remembering his position as a fugitive from the current authorities, put the props of an amateur theater in his backpack and left forever, closing the door behind him. The

former judge was a worldly wise man. He bitterly told that the Teutons are the eternal enemies of the Slavs: all their lives they taught their neighbors how to live and work. And now, when they have such a "military" machine, they will conquer all the Slavs by force, and the accursed Soviets have nothing to hope for a good peace with them! "Now the sausage-makers have imagined themselves - they tore us to pieces like an evil dog of a kitten, and now they will take on others! Hitler is like a cyclist - he must pedal, if he stops, he will fall! Pan Zagursky did not spare the Soviets either, calling them robbers from the high road; remembered their failed campaign against Warsaw in the twentieth year: "This has not happened in the history of Europe for a long time. They swooped in like the Huns, killed, robbed, humiliated, as best they could, ordinary inhabitants.

Especially the Cossacks - these despised everyone who was not on a horse. They are brave when there are many of them and there is a weak one in front of them, but when they were given a kick in the teeth somewhere near Lvov, they fled, leaving wagon trains with loot, dead and wounded. Until now, the Poles in those places remember this invasion and this "dog kre

And in the city, solitary arrests continued, right on the streets - they hunted for former officers, young people of military age. Once Andrzej almost fell into their tenacious paws. coming up

in the morning to the tram stop, he saw two, obviously alien in appearance, with a prickly look. And already in the tram I felt them approaching me. There were a lot of people, mostly women - employees of the Spiller textile factory. He instantly made up his mind to jump out of the car, and he began to make his way through the women who were noisy among themselves, whispering apologies, and behind him, scattering them, those two climbed after him, and the workers, sensing strangers, deliberately began to prevent them from wading through this soft, malleable but tenacious mass of bodies. Andrzej managed to jump out at the bus stop and rushed across the street into the

first lane. And for the first time in my life I heard the shaking sound of bullets over my head and two shots. They shot at the legs, the bullets ricocheted off the stone path into the sky, Andrzej had already returned home in gardens. Now all his thoughts were directed to his safety and the fight against the current government. The shots did not frighten him - they hardened him, sharpened his attention and ability to recognize danger in advance, warn and go towards it, if it is profitable and you want to survive this fight. The excitement of the player awakened the genes of centuries-old Polish rebellion dormant in him, his brain started working like a chess player, building numerous combinations and unexpected moves to deceive the opponent. This will be useful to him later, when he will have reliable people under his command, and now he alone has entered into an unequal duel with the

red hydra. And he began to prepare: he equipped a shelter in case of the arrival of uninvited guests, removed all traces of his stay from the house, adapted access to the roof through the dormer window, carefully checked the night curtains on the windows, prepared a backpack with the necessary things and put it behind the screen. He was afraid to go out into the city: they could look for him by signs. Once it occurred to him to arrange a masquerade, and then the theater props came in handy for him. And then a beggar gypsy with a swarthy face, shoulder-length black hair and dark glasses came out of the house of Pan Zagursky on crutches. So Andrzej acquired

a second appearance. During the whole day of wandering around the city, he saw and heard a lot. The city was bubbling dully: women openly scolded the new government among themselves for the loss of products on the market. The men were restrained - they were afraid of the harsh mea-

"Muscovites" in military uniform, mimicking their Russian speech. Patrols with the newly created workers' militia walked the streets. Andrzej easily found his pursuers; they in a pair "worked" along the same route. Watching them, tracked down their nest in the former hotel "Budapest". By the end of the day, they pulled up there without hiding. Three days later, he remembered by sight all the employees of the dealer service, all dressed as one in badly tailored cheap suits, in identical black boots, smoking Russian cigarettes of the Belomorkanal brand. There were about fifteen in all. They served in groups of two or three people, controlling the county town up and down. It was not difficult for them to listen to what the townsfolk were saying, to observe and detain suspicious ones, especially men. The fugitives from Warsaw and Bialystok could be seen at once - many of them were well dressed and this distinguished them from the locals. Perhaps they were former officers, policemen, officials. In Western Poland they were hunted by the Gestapo, and in the Eastern part by the NKVD. And here and there a concentration camp awaited them.

In early October, the potato harvesting season began. Many townspeople went to work in the countryside. Andrzej also went to the relatives of Pan Zagursky, where he harvested potatoes, cabbage, corn, earned several pounds of potatoes and corn, and brought all this to Zagursky's house at night. He continued to observe all precautions, improved them, inventing new types of disguise: he dressed up as an old man, portraying a crippled peasant, and even a woman dressed in mourning, there were many of these now in Poland. The judge chuckled, but watched his masquerade with interest.

Time passed languidly and slowly - the war stopped: the German troops froze in combat readiness on the French border. And the whole world lived in anticipation of terrible events. At night, Andrzej and Joseph listened to foreign radio: the powerful Moscow station interrupted everyone and repeated that the Finns threatened Leningrad and attacked the USSR. Victory marches rushed from Berlin, and in the intervals - crackling, barking speeches of the Fuhrer and the triumphantly asserting voice of the announcer. About the fate of the father and his colleagues in misfortune there was not a rumor or a spirit - as if they had sunk into the water! The judge tried to make inquiries with the newly formed city council, but achieved absolutely nothing, and as a result, one

from fillers. If Andrzej had not arranged for surveillance of his companion and had not managed to whisper to him in the hustle and bustle of the store, where the judge had come, that he should not lead the "tail" with him, but wait until the evening with friends, then one could expect a search in the house. After this incident, the judge

was imbued with respect for Andrzej. Rumors in the city were different: many did not believe that the test of loyalty required the transfer of detainees to the Union. But no one thought or imagined that it would end with Katyn!

In those anxious nights, Andrzej often dreamed of his father - weak, unprotected, so dear and close, looking at his son as if with reproach that he was slow and could not protect him. Who could have known and imagined that this would happen! The late autumn of

1939, with signs of nature, foreshadowed a harsh winter, and it passed through Eastern Europe, freezing through the ponds, ruining apple and cherry trees in the gardens. Danger lived next to Andrzej. During this time, the city militia was replenished with specialists from Russia, but in the secret base of the NKVD, the number of detectives seemed to have decreased: the "cleansing" of undesirable elements had decreased and the rest were only observing in the city. The city itself and the area adjacent to it, according to the law of the Soviets, were declared a border zone, this made it possible for the authorities to control the movement of residents of the county and visitors. Enter houses at any time of the day to check documents and detain anyone suspicious.

City officials began issuing new passports; at the same time, announcements appeared about the recruitment of labor for logging in the Urals. Andrzej understood that when obtaining a new passport, difficulties would arise in the police, so he often went to the market on his crutches to one Belarusian worker, and they were given documents in the first place. He handed over his good boots and received a passport in the name of Adamchuk Efrem Kuzmich. Now he was documented protected by a Belarusian name and working origin. The new authorities, tearing themselves up, shouted that national minorities were oppressed in Poland, and especially Belarusians. This Belarusian origin will be useful to him later, for infiltrating the partisans. Andrzej did not even begin to re-paste the photo and let go of a small, peasant beard and mustache, like the previous one

the owner of the passport, acquired a homespun scroll, three-pieces, and in this outfit he went around during the day, unrecognizable even by his acquaintances. Back in the fall, he decided to improve his German and English in order to get to Latvia, become a sailor on a ship, and then join the Warring against the Germans. But events preceded his intentions.

In the summer of 1940, the Germans defeated France, and on Apple Spas, when warm starry nights come, the Russians, by agreement with Hitler, occupied the Baltic states, while the Germans grabbed a tasty morsel - the Lithuanian port of Memel. Andrzej's

plan - to get into England and fight against the Germans - collapsed overnight! He was disappointed, but he did not lose the ability to be careful and prudent. It has become a habit: to see, to observe, to look for something suspicious in the behavior of the people around him, in the environment, not to show off. That incident on the tram, when the NKVD agents almost grabbed him, taught him a lot.

His companion, Iosif Zagursky, spent whole evenings reading the French newspapers Le Mond and Figaro, which he brought back in peacetime from Warsaw, where he attended meetings of the Union of Retired Officials from the Ministry of Justice. And put on the anniversary - the twentieth anniversary of the Rzhechi Commonwealth - in 1938 he was invited to a reception at the presidential palace as a veteran of the judicial mantle. How quickly everything passed in life: a gymnasium in Warsaw, students in St. Petersburg, the assassination of the liberator tsar, a judge's chair in Bialystok, then in Grodno, where he met old age. He had no children, the only nephew was somewhere in Berlin, married to a German woman. And now he was reading old newspapers, parsing the texts of the great Nostradamus, recalling the plans of the President-General to create a new union of the Lithuanian-Polish state "from mozh to mozh" [24]. The judge was confident that the Anglo-Saxons would defeat the Germans and expected that America was about to enter the war. He advised Andrzej to take up languages, and he crammed grammar in the evenings, translating from German from the Bible left in the

house by the judge's nephew. It went day after day. In the city, as before, in the morning there was a queue for bread, they were sold only until lunch. There was no other food in the nationalized stores, and only the market v

the only source of food; but the peasants were reluctant to take the new Soviet money and preferred to exchange for things - they disappeared with the advent of the

Soviets. And again it was autumn, and the Nativity of Christ, and the early spring of the forty-first year. She was remembered by the townsfolk with a huge flow of military people arriving in the vicinity of the city. The forests were filled with endless rows of tents, dugouts, huts, cars. The forest thicket could not hide such a large number of people, and in it, previously deserted, now, as in an anthill, there was a stirring of thousands of people.

People were talking about an imminent war. "With whom to fight?" Andrzej asked. "A well-known case is Soviets with the Teutons," the old grandfather answered him. A lot of army shoes, blankets, underwear appeared on the market. Moonshine was the most popular commodity among the military. But here the police did not doze off - there were night raids, searches.

It happened in the evening, at the end of May, when the lilac blossomed and the acacia dressed the streets in a white dress. Andrzej was returning home, carrying in his bag two books in German, received from a friend of the judge, whom he visited that evening, when suddenly a menacing cry was heard nearby: "Stop, I will shoot!" - and immediately a rifle shot, the clatter of feet; a tall man rushed past him, followed by two soldiers. And then he came across two commanders trotting behind the soldiers. They recoiled in surprise, but one of them deftly grabbed a pistol and commanded Andrzej: "Hands up!" They searched him and, finding books and a pocket dictionary in German, looked at each other and took him to the commandant's office. The duty officer, small in stature, with two cubes in his buttonholes, squinted, looking at books and a dictionary, immediately called somewhere and announced in a joyful voice that a man with German books had been detained. He was taken to the same hotel "Budapest", where he discovered the base of filers. His age was interrogated with a simple, kind peasant face. But another one appeared, in civilian clothes, with a displeased expression on his face. From everything it was clear that this was the head of the first, and the interrogation took on a harsh character. They forced him to confess for a long time that he was a German spy. And then they brutally beat the two of them, especially the same age with a kind peasant face. Andrzej lost consciousness, then, again

gaining and losing it, he stubbornly denied recruiting abroad and illegally crossing the border. In the

morning he woke up in a suburban prison, in a cell closely packed with different people. Then he lay for a long time, losing consciousness from pain. His neighbor, elderly, with a gray beard, gave him something to drink - Andrzej could not eat, the white-beard hid his rations in his knapsack. He was coughing and urinating blood; back, chest, thighs were blue, swollen from hemorrhage. His neighbor, watching him, said: "They beat me to death. Why did they cut you like that?" From small human sympathy, Andrzej silently began to cry. Only youth and a healthy body gave him the opportunity to rise to his feet on the tenth day. Expecting new interrogations, as in a dream, he recalled that they shouted to him in two voices: "You are not a Belarusian, you are not a peasant! Look at your hands, you brute, they are white and well-groomed!" But he denied everything, realizing that if he said the address of the judge, then there would be trouble. These beatings did not frighten him, but gave rise to anger, a desire to survive and take revenge on them all! He remembered the detention of his father and his acquaintances, the hunt for suspicious people, the words of Pan Zagursky "Bolsheviks are no better than fascists", and now, after this bloodbath, he had only

one thought in his thoughts: to take revenge if he lives! The white-bearded neighbor patiently helped him to his feet and spent days talking about himself, his village in the Novgorod region, how he returned home from the front and was mobilized into the Red Army, for some reason he was guilty - he was sentenced to death, fled with the sentry and ended up in detachment

"We gave the redheads a beating," he said, chuckling. - And no matter what tricks, traps, ambushes they did to us, but our intelligence chief, Lieutenant Panov, was brainy in this part, he always forestalled them. He appointed me as the commander of scouts for my quick wits. It used to happen that while the detachment was resting for the day, and my eagles dressed up in leather jackets, I had a red bow, a Mauser in a wooden holster and a mandate from Dzerzhinsky himself. We had one artist from among the criminals - a great master of forging documents and seals ... They came right in the afternoon to the county and immediately to the local Cheka. I am presenting documents for a special assignment, everything is in front of me in order. My eagles are silent, their muzzles frown, they cover themselves with fog. By evening, we, having learned everything that

necessary - passes, passwords, we leave for the detachment and perform at night. In the morning, without a fight, the county town is in our hands: all power is seized, the head of the Chekushka and the head of the police are already under interrogation, the "Chonovites" were disarmed and sent home, the commandant of the garrison - a young commissar - shot himself, and his company of rifles threw his hands up. But then the Red Cossacks volunteers piled on us, and we will jump out from behind the cordon, we will make a walk through two or three villages, we will hang the commissars from the heels and back! But since the twenty-first year, since the NEP was introduced, all the peasants turned their backs on us, and we dispersed in all directions. I stayed in Poland, I served as a ranger in the forestry. And when the Soviets came, I quit my job and went wandering around the villages, and that's when the police grabbed me. He regretted throwing away his cap - a trace of the cockade remained, so they sv

Summer has begun, Trinity has passed. In prison during the day they suffered from heat. Andrzej was no longer interrogated, but no one knew that the authorities were not up to the inmates of the local castle. At the end of May, two civilian defectors appeared in the NKVD of Bialystok and said that the Germans were preparing "signalmen" equipped with rocket launchers and special flashlights. And now the organs were thrown to detain border violators and expose scouts among them.

The fateful doomsday night has come for millions of destinies! She left a huge dent in the history of mankind, which has not been since the day of the flood!

That night, the head of the prison, Lieutenant Fomenko, compiled lists of prisoners to send them to the Union. At midnight, he received a call from Bialystok, and he assured in a cheerful voice that he had complete order at the facility. At five o'clock in the morning an aircraft rumble was heard, and humpbacked Junkers, wings shining in the rising sun, swooped down on the center of the city. Bomb explosions woke up the prison, the cameras hummed like a swarm of bees. Bialystok no longer answered, and Fomenko only managed to get through to the head of his garrison and was instructed to open the mobilization package. After reading a short instruction, he immediately gave the command to sound an alarm in the prison and build a guard company. A few minutes later, a reinforced detachment with light machine guns stood at the door of each cell. Towards dinner, a messenger rushed on a lathered horse and handed over a piece of paper. Fomenko read it, and a few minutes later in the yard

a fire was blazing, where the documentation of the prison was burning, and its head with a pistol in trembling hands approached the first cell, in front of him were two sergeants with "handbrakes". As soon as the door opened, the machine gunners stepped over the threshold and opened fire point-blank at the cell. She gasped in surprise, but long, unceasing lines drowned out the first screams. Fomenko shouted: "Change the disks," and fired from the "TT" at the lying bodies. The cell was filled with the smell of cartridge burning and blood. Then there were nine more cameras and the same frantic shooting at the mess of living bodies. It was terrible to look at Fomenko - there was madness in his eyes, foam on his lips, his hands were black from the shooting. So, according to the instructions of the

NKVD, the inhabitants of the Grodno prison were shot. A lot of time passed when Andrzej emerged from the darkness and suddenly saw the face of the old judge. He realized that he was alive. Now he was in a German hospital, not knowing how he ended up there. In his ward were three

more German soldiers with the usual civilian ailments. He listened to the conversation of the soldiers and realized that it was only the third day of the war and that the Red Army was almost defeated, and the German tanks were on the outskirts of Minsk. The head doctor came to the rounds - a strong man with grayish temples. He painfully crushed the exit hole under the shoulder blade, said a few phrases in Latin, glanced over Andrzej's face, smiled, pleased with the result of the treatment. At night, left alone with his thoughts, Andrzej again and again remembered his father, himself, prison, execution and asked himself: why did the Soviets put him outside the law, for what offenses did his father suffer, why did he himself have to hide like a criminal, and how this swift judgment has come to pass. What remained in his memory was the sharply opened door of the cell, the deafening, point-blank burst of machine-gun fire, a painful and sharp blow to the chest, an explosion under the scapula, and ... the darkness closed his eyes. "God! Why did you doom me to live at such a time and what did I do wrong to be shot like a mad dog?!" From pity and injustice to himself, he wanted to cry, but his eyes were dry, and his heart was bursting with resentment, his head was flooded with boiling water and a thirst for revenge on everything connected with the red-star existence. Here, in a hospital bed, he vowed to fight the S

to express gratitude in German to the head physician, and this was soon succeeded. The German was pleasantly surprised, and a conversation ensued. Andrzej told about himself. The doctor listened to him with sympathy, then said a few words of encouragement and left the room. This was enough for the head German nurse to show him attention and courtesy as well. Already before being discharged, Major Glyuknauz, an Abwehr employee, entered the ward, and Andrzej's fate was

sealed. For many residents of Western Belarus, the war went far to the East; here, almost no one regretted that the Soviets had disappeared from these places, but few rejoiced at the arrival of the Germans.

Major Gluknauz of Alsatian origin, polite, with noticeable French gallantry, had only to make a small effort, and Andrzej agreed to serve in the Wehrmacht as an interpreter, with all kinds of allowances, but without the right to wear a military uniform. First, he participated in numerous interrogations and conversations with captured commanders of the Red Army, learned army terminology, their individual habits, created a whole collection of genuine documents: from a general's identity card to a Red Army book. When the occupation showed its clawed paw of lawlessness, and the life and well-being of a simple

layman were outlawed, when many realized their insignificance in the face of the new government, then a prelude to resistance arose on a vast territory. Moscow, not waiting for the spontaneous emergence of the partisan movement, began to introduce it by force, throwing into the rear a mass of trained, but sometimes untrained ideological enthusiasts to fight fascism. And when the first signs of armed underground, sabotage, sabotage were discovered, Lisovetsky was appointed head of the group to combat sabotage in transport.

In those days, the encircled from the Red Army still enjoyed honor and respect among ordinary people: they were sympathized, given shelter, shared provisions, showed secret paths in the forests.

He uncovered the first sabotage group of the Soviet underground in Opine, infiltrating the organization as a commander from the encirclement, then he brought his "colleagues", and when the actions of each underground member were established, they were all arrested and replaced

workers and specialists from Slovakia. He was nominated for an award. Then he would have many such operations ...

The five he selected - the core of his team - like a hoop, strengthened the hatred of the Soviets. Each of them has his own account for the Bolsheviks. There were at least a dime a dozen offended, but Andrzej chose those who would rather die than live with them! So he ended up with two Lithuanian brothers who fled from the echelon during deportation, two Belarusians whose farms were burned for resisting the authorities. The top five was closed by a man of Greek or Armenian origin, middle-aged, with a phenomenal memory, a sharp, penetrating mind - his main adviser and executor of plans: to find a trace to the underground and penetrate there. Each of the five was independent in his actions: he could supplement his legend in the course of action, acquire informants, double-check and direct their efforts to obtain reliable information. The tactics of combating the resistance of the

counterintelligence of the Wehrmacht were entirely under the influence of the Gestapo. Abwehr counterintelligence officers, like their secret police, sought to immediately eliminate the entire group without a trace with one blow, notify the population as widely as possible about the capture of intruders, arrest as many indirect accomplices as possible and, with the help of the local police, arrange a public execution of them. Lisovetsky had a different tactic - he

preferred various combinations: not to take the entire group, but to leave part of the asset at large, it was better to keep them under control through informants - they were a bridge to the partisans, agents of the NKVD special detachments; sometimes he released the leaders of small units, which aroused suspicion among those who were at large about their re-recruitment. Later, they got into the "black" lists of partisans for liquidation, and there was no time to figure it out - slap and that's it! .

Major Gluknauz, by that time the head of the Sonderkommando R [26], made him his non-staff adviser in the fight against sabotage in the rear of Army Group Center.

When Sazonov, after a long time, built different versions about Lisovetsky's mysterious visits to the Installation junction, he could not even imagine that there was an ordinary everyday reason, but it was ...
Once

in Smolensk, Lisovetsky met his love, and, not knowing motherly love, was fierce deadly events of recent years, he passionately and recklessly reached out to her - the only one, with cornflower blue eyes, slender as a reed, tender and responsive, like a violin string. The Eastern Front slowly and prudently, but

steadily retreated. In September 1943, fighting began in the Smolensk direction. Lisovetsky escaped to the farm where his love lived in order to send her to a safe place. And, returning the next day, in the fog of early morning I met a column of Soviet tanks. They stood in the copse like a herd of outlandish animals, their trunks of their guns raised to the enemy. He did not feel fear - there was a keen desire to get out of the environment as soon as possible. So he soon found himself in a safe house, where he extracted the necessary documents, uniforms from the cache, and in the morning of the next day he was already in the second echelon units of the advancing Red Army. He did not think of breaking forward, but the Germans had already retreated far. He was lucky - he unexpectedly met a field army hospital at one of the stations. Wrapping his head in bandages, stuttering heavily, with a Belarusian accent, he settled down at the reception point, where a dozen or two soldiers were already lying and sitting. A few days later, in the team of convalescents, he worked on the improvement of the hospital. Here, foreman Sosnin fell in love with his accuracy and hard work, and with his help he received a genuine Red Army book in the name of Sergeant Knyazhich.

Chapter XIII. PENETRATION INTO THE INTELLIGENCE GROUP

Major Bondarev, displeasedly following the instructions of his boss, patiently leafed through and studied the letter files for all divisions of the division in search of candidates for front-line deployment. His eyes were already dazzled by the many reports of informers written in clumsy handwriting, in pencil. Occasionally, more competent reports of residents came across in the files, on good paper, made in ink. In one of them he found information about Sergeant Knyazhich. An informer nicknamed Boyky reported that Knyazhich came to the telephone company in November last year. He is secretive by nature: he speaks little about himself and his relatives, they allegedly lived in Western Belarus; before the war, he worked for German farmers near Grodno, so he knows a little spoken German; Mobilized to the Red Army in June 1941. There was also a note that Knyazhich was checked according to the records - there were no compromising materials. Bondarev treated Sazonov's recommendations

casually. He needed to look through not only the letter file for the communications battalion, but also the archival records for previously checked ones, and for this he had to turn to Sergeant Kalmykov, whom he could not stand, and this was beyond his strength. He couldn't bring himself to approach this clerk sergeant, the chief's favorite, with a request. But in vain he did not do this, and this will become clear later, when he, pitiful and crushed by what happened, will appear before a military tribunal.

Sergeant Knyazhich, aka Lisovetsky, with many other surnames, with which he covered himself in risky operations against the partisan underground, had iron restraint and, most importantly, a sense of danger! He had the ability to foresee any trap of the enemy, unravel its plan, confuse the enemy, impose his will on him and strike with lightning speed! He gained experience in recognizing where and how a trained agent from the NKVD special detachment works, and where a self-taught underground worker attracted to the resistance. The first were distinguished by their slowness, desire

thoroughly delve into the situation, excessive suspicion of the newly involved, fear of getting involved in risky operations. They were more predictable in their actions. But those self-taught - voluntary scouts, saboteurs - residents of villages, cities, stations, involved in hostility to the occupation, fueled by the organized resistance of the partisans and encirclement, were less predictable. They acted spontaneously, without any rules, were not afraid of risk, did not suffer from the tediousness of suspicion, hoping for fellow countrymen and family ties.

From the time Lisovetsky left the hospital to serve in the divisional communications battalion, he began to prepare for the transition of the front. But he knew that the front line of the division was thickly stuffed with mines. The Germans also sowed their "front end" with newly invented jumping "frogs", tension, surprise and other deadly dirty tricks lying in the thickness of the snow. It was madness to go through this death streak. His sergeant's position - a mechanic of a mobile platoon - allowed him to be outside the company, to have his own work area, tools. He quickly mastered the repair of telephones, the ability to solder, splice wires, and even helped repair a platoon motorcycle. To solve his problem - to penetrate the information network - he was helped by a simplified way of working among special officers among personnel. Many of the company's soldiers did not hide their cooperation with counterintelligence, as if taking credit for this. Nobody reproached them for this, and only behind their backs they said: "Look, Rozhkov-seksot went to report to the foreman in the dugout; soon a "mansion" will come there - Senior Lieutenant Nikiforov. He, indeed, came to the foreman's dugout, the doors were closed, and they "talked" there alone. The "Osobnyak" pretended to observe secrecy, and the soldiers delicately pretended that they allegedly did not know about his covert work. Each of the parties wanted to spend as little effort as possible on this meeting, not seeing any sin in it. The prince was interested to know whether special officer Nikiforov would show interest in him. To do this, he became close to one

of "these" who went to the foreman, and once in his presence in the company dugout, when the soldiers were examining the found cover of a German

magazine, Knyazhich slowly translated a short text word by word. Perhaps the report of the informant Boyky would have lain in the letter case without movement, but now it was just right - they were looking for people to be thrown to the rear, and it was then that Bondarev was "lucky", which he will remember for a long time! A bizarre fate temptingly opened its arms to him: after such a stubborn search, when he already wanted to report to Sazonov about the impossibility of completing the task, suddenly he personally, having shoveled a bunch of cases, finds a candidate, and even what kind of Belarusian-Westerner with knowledge of the language, a poor

career sergeant origin! Then he will tell many people that, having an unusual "operational scent", he found the forgotten message of the informant. And it was he, Bondarev, as a former responsible and politically sufficiently trained political worker, who immediately drew attention to this document and did not pass him by, like some security officers with experience in Chekist work. This was addressed to two employees of the department attached to him to help the Sazonovs to fulfill the directive of the Center. And right there, in their presence, he long and tediously proved the superiority of political knowledge over Chekist practice and, godlessly twisting Lenin's saying, said: - Even at the dawn of the

revolution, Vladimir Ilyich pointed out that the choice of a communist for leadership work is determined not by professional knowledge, but by political knowledge. maturity and devotion to the party...

One of the operatives even carefully wrote down this guiding Leninist instruction, coming from the lips of the deputy head of the department, in a notebook, and asked him in which volume it could be found. He paused and edifyingly replied that every communist needs to read and re-read our founder of the party and state and be guided by his works in our work, so "read all of Lenin and you will find these words there." After he left the dugout, the second security officer, older than him, said:

"This is not the first time I've heard this and I can say that only a political worker claims that it's not professional knowledge that determines a leadership position, but loyalty to the party and political literacy ..." and, slightly lowering his voice, he added: "Between us

Speaking of which, our Bondarev is an asshole, he pretends to be very politically savvy, and at every step he babbles about this! But ask him what is the difference between an agent and an informant - he still does not know. I have already become convinced of this by talking with him these days. And I also realized that he is an impenetrable fool! And with what arrogance he told me that the party had sent him to strengthen the Smersh, and looked at me as if I were a soldier who had made a mistake! But he is in our work - neither ear nor snout. And, it is necessary to immediately take a leading position in our department! And I'm still breaking the Finnish service, but still the senior opera, and no movement! After all, in fairness, I should be Sazonov's deputy, but here, you see, they sent this figure from the political

reserve. The younger interlocutor was sympathetically silent, he was entirely on the side of his comrade - he simply did not like alien strangers. Approximately the same attitude towards the new deputy was among the entire

operational staff of the department. Several days passed, and Knyazhich almost forgot about his "bait" with the cover of a German magazine, when he was suddenly called to the foreman, where he met with the "mansion". Senior Lieutenant Nikiforov, a native of Chuvashia, broad-cheeked, stocky, with a squint of cunning Asian eyes, without any reservations or introductions, began to ask him with captivating simplicity how he knew German. And Knyazhich, faithfully portraying a Belarusian peasant, slowly, in detail told the "mournful" story of how his poor, defenseless family lived from bread to water by odd jobs for hire, and also about how badly they lived in panorama Poland, and they saw the light in the window when the Red Army came! And he also told that his whole family worked for several years on the estate of a German family, and there, with their children, he learned to read and communicate in this language. During the conversation, he, apparently out of old habit, strove to call Nikiforov "pan senior lieutenant", trustingly and with devotion looked at the special officer with his wide eyes. "Osobnyak", brought up on class consciousness from childhood, somehow imbued and sincerely sympathized with the poor, landless Belarusian and was very pleased with the conversation - he fulfilled the task of the department's leadership!

Knyazhich was also pleased with the result of his conceived game and noted to himself that Nikiforov, in a conversation, pretending to be important, mentioned that Knyazhich might be sent on a mission behind the front line, but immediately fell silent, as if realizing that he had blurted out too much, attentively and inquisitively looked at the interlocutor, and he, having portrayed indifference and even complete misunderstanding of what was said, did not show any interest in this. The special officer often used such cunning in conversation, sometimes with results. And Knyazhich, recalling the entire course of the conversation, made the assumption that they were interested in him, since he speaks German, which means that they will study him from all sides, and if Nikiforov did not mention it by chance, then they will take it seriously. He was not afraid of a full check - his homeland was under the Germans, the documents were authentic. Here are just a treacherous entry in the Red Army book: "in exchange for the one spoiled during the performance of auxiliary work," but there was a signature of the head of the field hospital and a seal - everything is as it should be in such cases. If they dig deep and quickly, they can check in the places of the former service, find colleagues who knew the identity of Knyazhich Roman Yakovlevich, but for this it is necessary that the colleagues were alive and time for verification. In order to identify him, he must be detained and sent to the unit for identification, but for this he must be arrested, but, one wonders, for what crime and who will authorize his arrest? On suspicion of using someone else's documents? But for this you need to prove for what purposes he did it! .. The diversity of thoughts - from assumptions about how it can be calculated, to the consequences in case of exposure - captured him completely, but he immediately pulled

himself together, gathered himself into a tight, sensitive string and waited. Nikiforov's efforts were noticed: he began to spend whole days in the battalion, more often to visit the foremen's dugout. The prince felt the attention and readiness to establish friendly relations with him from three colleagues at once, by the way, who had not previously thought about friendship with him. He realized that he was being studied and accepted the game. Two of them were simply stupid, and each of them believed that only he was doing the task, so they interfered with each other, and one of them even slandered Knyazhich about the other. But Knyazhich reconciled them and called to help him hang a door on the dugout where h

like a bath sheet. He walked, stepping on his heels, accompanying his ward everywhere, and even to the newly built bathhouse, pestering with questions where he was born, who his parents were, whether he went to church, where and when he was wounded, in which hospital he was treated. And he kept asking and finding out, and then he went around the second circle with the same questions, hoping that the interlocutor had forgotten his answer. But for Knyazhich, these were the basics of tricks, he knew with whom he was playing, and did not give him the pleasure of catching himself in the answers.

Bondarev went to the department as a birthday boy, calling himself the creator and founder of the deep penetration reconnaissance group. He now believed that the task he had completed was the largest contribution to the department's operational efforts. He considered the painstakingly ordinary routine work to ensure combat readiness in parts of the division to be a secondary matter.

Sazonov reservedly noted the successes of his deputy, carefully reviewed the materials on the group, instructed to start an observational file and outlined a number of operational measures for additional verification of all candidates for the reconnaissance group, about which he personally instructed Bondarev and ordered him to draw up an individual verification plan for each candidate, and later collect characterizing data for each from at least three sources of information. Bondarev, believing that the work he had done was successfully completed, tried to enter into a discussion that the candidates he had selected were honest Soviet people and that collecting any additional materials about their devotion and consciousness was an unnecessary undertaking. Here, for example, take this Belarusian-Westerner, because he has been fighting since the beginning of the war, but he could have deserted even at the time of mobilization. He, as a true patriot of our socialist Fatherland, fought without sparing his life and has a serious wound - is this not proof of his devotion to our Motherland and the party, although he is non-partisan. Such people as this Knyazhich are the best representatives, personifying the Stalinist national policy. Here Bondarev suffered a gallop - not to stop. And in an almost formal tone, he rapped out:

“That’s what, Comrade Sazonov, I’ll tell you, but don’t be offended - a communist must always listen to critical remarks from

party comrades, not only from higher-ups, but also from my subordinates, which I am. So, you, despite your position, Chekist practice, do not catch the political moment in assessing the reliability of our Soviet people! In this case, you expressed distrust in five soldiers of our victorious Red Army, and their additional check will take a lot of time, thus you deliberately delay the time when fulfilling the order of the Center! - he said the last phrase almost in syllables, with a hidden threat in his voice. Sazonov looked with annoyance at his "beloved" and thought: "Here he is imposing himself

on my head! Now he will have to prove the most elementary truths and spend at least an hour on him, and I need to prepare for the inspection of the department. How would you get rid of him?" And suddenly it dawned on him: "I will send him, perhaps, to the head of division Kuzakov." - So, Alexei Mikhailovich, - naming my deputy by name and patronymic

and putting, as far as possible, a note of respect into my voice, - I believe that you should be praised for defending your point of view so ardently, but I cannot agree on the issue of my misunderstanding of the political moment in terms of assessing the loyalty and devotion of the Soviet people. I have no such grounds, but, guided by the orders, instructions of the Center, as well as the instructions of Comrade Abakumov, I see it as my duty to insist on a thorough check of the selected candidates. This is required by the guidelines of the Central Committee of the Party and Comrade Stalin personally, and you, as a former political worker, are well aware of the Party's demands for political vigilance, especially since we are preparing the group not for a picnic, but for in-depth reconnaissance of the Center group and the entire echeloned defense in depth. up to 400–500 kilometers. The Headquarters and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief entrust us with part of the task of defeating the Germans in this direction. - The mention of the Central Committee, party guidelines, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and its Supreme Command lowered the enthusiasm of the "beloved", but he did not think to give in to his boss and immediately decided to take his advice - to go to Kuzakov and get his support, which he did not doubt. The opinion of the boss, as an authority, he assumed in the near future, along with other

compromising evidence, to use against Dmitry Vasilyevich in order to achieve his removal from office. When

Bondarev stated his point of view, believing that his boss, abusing his official position, was criminally delaying the completion of the most important task on which the success of their front's operation depended, he, as a communist, must state with all frankness that Sazonov was a typical reinsurer, and his instructions regarding additional checks of people who, by their heroic deeds at the front, have already proved their reliability three times, nothing more than political myopia, bordering on a crime!

Having gone through a portfolio-carrying school in the reception room of political agency leaders, a former witness of pre-war repressions among the political staff, miraculously survived and taught by the bitter experience of former bosses who made independent decisions on cases involving risk, now he has made it a rule not to take the initiative, not to make decisions on issues doubtful, not to participate in them, not to contribute to them, even if the closest friend asks for it, which he never had by virtue of his character. He had no love and devotion for others! He cut them off like a blade, etched, like a woman, an unwanted child from her womb, under the influence of party purges, that nightmare of the thirties: trials, denunciations, slander, general arrests, large and small intrigue, with which the official life of the political agencies of the Red Army was filled, which returned to normal only at the beginning of the Finnish campaign, and in some districts - only at the beginning of the big war. After listening to Bondarev, Kuzakov agreed with him in assessing Sazonov's actions and promised

to support his former colleague in every possible way. But the inner voice of his nature forbade him to participate in this dubious business, and his promises to give a call to his friends in the reception room of the Member of the Military Council and to talk to some people were empty promises.

Chapter XIV. ABOUT NOBILITY AND INTELLIGENCE

The spring of the third year of the war, almost like a flood, broke through the dam of the Eastern Front in one place or another. The hopeful cries from Berlin about the creation of an impregnable Atlantic wall and the salvation of civilization from the barbarian Bolsheviks gradually faded, but the population of the Reich, fueled by powerful propaganda and the promises of the Fuhrer, still had the belief that the enemy would not enter the territory of

the "fatherland". Diligence, order, discipline, the absence of a hint of defeat among the ordinary people of Germany made her still a formidable adversary. The whole industry, despite the bombing, worked like clockwork; the factories of Europe, where a German soldier was stationed, worked hard in the same German manner and neatly.

In his homeland, petty functionaries regularly held meetings, involving in them not only members of the party, but also Housewives; the Fuhrer addressed them, calling them the fortress of the nation, they were praised by Goebbels. At the birth of a son - a future soldier of the Wehrmacht - the local party committee congratulated the woman in labor, sent a stroller, a complete set of linen and clothes for the newborn, with a greeting card from the Fuhrer!

But at that time, the first harbingers of defeat appeared on the Eastern Front - the transition of individual soldiers to the side of the Soviet troops. These were still rare occurrences, special reports were written about each of them to the Headquarters or GlavPU. The central newspapers excitedly, multiplying, exaggerating, talked about the imminent defeat of Germany. But before that it was even more than a year!

Once Sazonov had the opportunity to take part in a survey of a defector. He was a typical German - overweight, light blond, but not very neat in everyday life. He was wearing worn cuffs, a crumpled soldier's uniform that had not been washed for a long time; next to him on a bench is a winter cap with a visor and a gray-green overcoat. Boots - with wide bell-tops, but no longer barren, but from some kind of ersatz, almost of our tarpaulin origin. The soldier turned out to be a former white-ticket soldier, drafted in September last year and

completed a three month course. Dmitry Vasilyevich remarked to himself: it's not bad - at such a time to give three months of soldier's study; yes, in 90 days for 12 hours you can learn a lot and teach a lot. He immediately asked what military specialty he received. The interpreter from the intelligence department, a brisk lad with the epaulets of a junior lieutenant, with a blond forelock of hair, took out a soldier's book from a folder, professionally quickly found a note in it about his studies and the military profession. Of all the words of the defector,

Sazonov caught one - "mashinen geveer", which means machine gunner. The translator confirmed that the soldier was the first number in the calculation of the MG-34 light machine gun. All those present knew well what the MG-34 machine gun was like in terms of rate of fire and reliability. But Sazonov also wanted to know a lot more: about the mood of the soldiers, how he managed to get out of the position, how he crossed the front line, whether he was afraid of being blown up by mines. The German looked with regret at the half-eaten porridge in the bowler hat and began to answer. The head of the intelligence department, Major Sharov, slender and fit, hurriedly wrote down his answers, because from hour to hour they were supposed to call from the army intelligence department with instructions to send the defector to their disposal. Slowly, occasionally glancing at Sazonov, guessing in him a senior commander, the soldier said in a businesslike way that replenishment had come to the companies of their regiment from very young white-tickers who had barely reached the age of eighteen and former deferrals. There were no more than 10-15 people per company left as regular soldiers. Among the soldiers it is forbidden to discuss the situation on the fronts aloud. The non-commissioned officers and corporals are constantly with the soldiers in caponiers and bunkers. Recently there was a case when a young soldier decided to run across, but was blown up by a mine before reaching your front line. He was pulled out, but he died from blood loss. - Well, how did you manage to pass the

cutting edge? Sazonov asked through an interpreter. And the soldier sensibly and convincingly, gesticulating frantically with his hands, outlined the steep descent of the ravine, which rested almost on our front line. On the ledges, where mines could not be placed because of the slope, he reached our positions and, lying in a camouflage coat, watched the change of outposts leave the bunker and go into the trenches. Then he shouted: "Rus

croak. Everyone smiled, as if condescendingly excusing him for this nickname and at the same time realizing that before them was sitting not a prisoner, with shaking hands, but a man who consciously considered his act; and they, the front-line soldiers, saw this as a good sign, because each of them made an unmeasurable contribution to make this German decide to cross. Oh, this quick-witted Russian soul! Now they were already ready to do something

pleasant for him, no malice, hostility towards him because it was he and his army who came to us and that because of the war everyone's plans for a good life collapsed. Now everyone sat opposite him and looked good-naturedly at their former enemy, sharing with him what they had: a piece of bread and porridge. But none of them at that moment thought that in front of them was a soldier of the enemy army, a trained professional machine gunner, and on his account not one dozen, but maybe hundreds of our dead and wounded, and they, forgetting about it, were ready fraternize with him. After all, how! He voluntarily came to them, he does not want to fight for Hitler, and therefore they were touched that here he is - a German soldier, realized the strength of their army and ran over to them!

The battalion commander, a hefty guy with a blush all over his cheek, in whose area the defector was detained, also somehow wanted to show himself, he was tired of sitting in the shadows: questions were asked by the head of the intelligence service of the division, a former student Major Sharov, and Sazonov. But the battalion commander, considering the defector his trophy, also began to join the survey and in a masterly voice said to the translator:

"Come on, ask this fascist how many long-term firing points they have against our sector?" Sazonov and those present saw

how the German shuddered, and the translator had not yet had time to translate for him, and he was already frightened, pressing his hands to his chest, several times repeated the phrase "they are not fascist ...". Everyone looked accusingly at the battalion commander. But the course of the survey and its emotional positive outburst for the participants was disrupted. And already without a defector and translator, Major Sharov with

regret said:

- Eh, battalion commander, battalion commander, you spoiled our song! .. - What other song? he asked in bewilderment. - And you, battalion commander, have you ever seen Gorky's play "At the Bottom"? - Never!

Where did you live before
the war? - In

Gorky ... - Here, you see what a wonderful fellow countryman you have, but you don't know his play. Well, okay, everything is still ahead of you, but you must watch this play after the war, and then you will understand why you ruined the song ... And you called him a fascist in vain! Now, if you called him a Fritz, it's almost the same as he calls us - Rus-Ivan - it's not offensive, it seems to be a national identity, and a fascist is already an ideology and a crime against humanity. This German, perhaps, is not a "Parteigenosse", but has defected to us. This, consider, is no longer an enemy ... Since

what year have you been at
the front? Since September forty-two. - And I - since June forty-one ... Tell me, when did we start calling them Fritz? You don't remember, but I'll tell you - after the Kursk Bulge, when they were given a decisive beating and the offensive was carried out on almost all fronts. It was here that we proved that a German can be beaten not only in winter, but also in summer. This is where the nickname "Fritz" stuck to him, and this already meant that our fear had disappeared and at the same time we had learned to fight. And then, in this word, our soldier put, as it were, an element of condescension instead of the official,

irrevocably tough "fascist." Isn't that
right, Dmitry Vasilyevich?! Sazonov smiled and asked Sharov: "What faculty of p
did?

- Literature and
language ... - That's what is noticeable that you convincingly
interpret the history of the emergence of the word. Dahl's laurels haunt
you, don't they, Comrade

Major?! The day had noticeably increased, and the spring sun was
already peeping into the fir thickets, where thick layers of snow still lay.
Orphan winter receded, filling the rivers, streams, streams, lakes,
swamps with water. Gradually, dugouts and dugouts began to be
heated, in some places the forced relocation of the shooters to other
apartments, where it was drier, began. Hills were chosen. But many
remained in their old places, continuing to scoop and scoop peat slurry
with kettles from under the floors. The "old men" could not remember
such a winter and promised a universal flood. Gradually reduced the supply of produ

The N-th army, which received everything necessary for the front, was filled to capacity, because the railway began to work, and the automobile regiment, on brand new American "Studebakers" without Tired, drove and unloaded countless boxes right in the forest on a bed, under a tarpaulin. , bags, cardboard bales, girded with metal tape, with allied help: stew, lard, biscuits, sugar, flour, tea. Ammunition was in separate piles. Thus, a whole city of streets and alleys was formed in the forest. The supply went in a wide stream - the half-starved beggarly rear of the country, straining, dragged the burden of war, making incredible efforts for the front. The army's supplies spent the day and night in tents, taking on loads, and prayed that the Germans would not find them and gouge them. Soon they brought huge camouflage nets, covered the city, masked the access roads. But how to throw the necessary cargo to the divisions of the first echelon? Neither caterpillar tractors nor American all-terrain vehicles could break through to the front line. There were 25-30 most difficult kilometers left. That's when, using the emergency law of wartime, the mobilization of all the survivors, mainly the elderly, women, teenagers, was announced in the front line. Dressed in rags, wearing bast shoes on their feet, they silently listened to the formidable order, looking down, not trying to refuse, and then in knapsacks, in bags at the ready, carried mines, medium-caliber shells, fell from fatigue and hunger, slowly trudged to the front line, knowing that without ammo soldier

cannot fight.

Two days ago Sazonov met such a traveler. They were mostly women of different ages; There were two youngsters with children. Children 6-7 years old, it is not clear from their clothes, either boys or girls, having met Sazonov and a messenger on horseback, timidly huddled up to their mothers. This chain of tired, exhausted women, stretching for a kilometer, struck him with its doom and humility. They did not look around, they were not interested in riders in raincoats. They looked down at their feet, their heads bowed... Dmitry Vasilyevich suddenly imagined his mother and sister among them, and his heart ached with pity for these nameless workers.

They galloped forward along the route and at the first warehouse they saw three soldiers sitting by the fire. Sazonov gave an order to the head of the warehouse

gather everyone but sentries and meet a column of exhausted women. The head of the warehouse, an efficient foreman, having learned that the head of the "Smersh" division was in front of him, instantly gathered a dozen soldiers and, leaving behind the sergeant - the head of the guard, rushed towards the women. A frail old man remained by the fire. He explained that he had brought shells here with his villagers yesterday, but he fell ill and stayed with the soldiers until morning. And, turning to Sazonov, he said:

"I'm sorry, comrade military man, but I'll say that you did it cordially that you sent soldiers to help the women. Here, I remember, we stood near Kovno in that German one, and it was in autumn; the rains charged - not to breathe, the roads became sour. I am in the battery - a riding postilion, there are three shells left for each gun. Our division commander, a dashing colonel, God rest his soul, died six months later, knew that a convoy with shells was coming towards us, and gave the order to send two riders, meet and hurry, because from the headquarters they reported: it seems that the Germans are preparing for attack. Here is sergeant major Penkov, also rest his soul, our soldiers killed him because he was too demanding and hesitated a little, he twirls his finger in front of your nose and in a menacing voice, rot, he says, and I'll do it in your finger, you will recover with blood, I understand! .. It was he who played such a comedy for recruits - they were afraid of him! And then, as the tsar was overthrown, no one listened to Penkov, and he kept scaring the new arrivals in the old way. And then one was a fulgan for the whole battery, he shot Penkov in the stomach, and he himself ran out of fear. So I forgot a little, why did I remember Penkov? Ah, now I remember! Penkov then gives the command to me and another dashing horseman: gait along the track and meet the convoy! And the convoy got stuck in the floodplain along Ushi - they barely saved the horses. I jump back, me to report to the colonel. I told him - so, they say, and so. Then he takes two officers and a non-commissioned officer and we gallop to the wagon train. The colonel corrugated to me: "Go to the church, and let them sound the alarm and gather the people." Their priest didn't seem to want to make a gathering, but I had to whip him with a whip, so he ran so fast that I barely caught up with him at the church. They gathered the people, and the colonel announced philistine duty and ordered them to appear at the same moment with carts and take the shells to the positions. The people, of course, complied with the order, and the clerk gave each, signed by the colonel, a bank coupon to receive money for

at the expense of the military department ... - lighting a cigarette from a coal, he, looking at Sazonov, continued: - And this was during the time of the tsarist government, but now it's Soviet and supposedly people's, but no one gives us any money for our obligatory service, although our wench, not watered and not fed, dragged forty pounds on their own hump across the impassability! But tell me, comrade chief, could your army share food with the layman for our work! ..

Sazonov blushed deeply and, turning away, began to scrape the dirt from his boots, hiding his face from the old soldier. Then he will tell in detail about this at the headquarters of the division, and only Lepin, thinking, will say: "Dear Dmitry Vasilyevich, our army is young and has not yet managed to acquire legal regulation of relations with civilians and institutions. It is believed that the people and the army are united, hence the labor and expenses of the inhabitants are not reimbursed, believing that the army protects the people. And the Congress of Vienna, after the victory over Napoleon, provided for several articles in the rules of warfare, where it was stated that participants in hostilities should, if possible, not harm the civilian environment and, observing the sacred principles of private property, compensate financially for the provision of services to the army and for the inflicted material damage. And here is the service of the army, associated with hard work. Of course, our rear servicemen should act humanely: at least in gratitude to feed the people, but for this you need to be imbued with sympathy and mercy! And I am touched, Dmitry Vasilievich, that you were the first to pay attention to this fact, and I express my gratitude to you for your humanity, "and he will shake Sazonov's hand firmly.

In early March, the division received a message that during the redeployment, the group of the headquarters of the 1st Ukrainian Front was ambushed by Bendera, where the front commander, General of the Army Vatutin, who died of wounds on February 28, 1944, was seriously wounded. In a short message from the Headquarters, General Abakumov, the head of the Smersh Main Directorate of the Defense Ministry, was instructed to take measures to protect the headquarters and ensure the physical security of officials according to the attached list. Scheduled within a week

solve personnel issues on the additional staffing of security headquarters. The selection and verification of them was entrusted to the service of the Special Departments.

The message from Headquarters struck everyone with its unusualness. In the active army, everyone believed that our main enemy was fascist Germany, and its native satellites were Italy, Hungary, Romania, but for some Ukrainian nationalists, little known to most officers, to attack the headquarters and kill the front commander on the liberated territory of Ukraine, it was higher their understanding!

Political officers of all ranks and ranks could not clearly explain who the Bendera and OUN people were, but after what had happened, they began to rumble in front of large and small audiences at the top of their voices, pressing on the loss of Bolshevik vigilance, that gunpowder must always be kept dry, and to expose fascist henchmen of all stripes, it is necessary to raise the level of political knowledge and improve party and Komsomol work! Sazonov, also not knowing anything about either Bendera or OUN, believed that these were different formations. And only the arrival of Major

Kurakin, the coordinator for the search for Abwehr and Gestapo agents, gave him the opportunity to learn about Ukrainian nationalists, about the Polish Home Army, which had already shown itself to be resistance in the rear of two Belarusian fronts, and much more that the head of the Smersh department should know divisions. Pyotr Petrovich Kurakin was tall and thin. In the pre-war past, he was an assistant professor of history at Tomsk University, spoke German and French. Externally and internally - a typically intelligent person. Sazonov was even surprised - how

could such a man from science get into their service! But the one who sent him here was not mistaken! The former associate professor was the author of many articles on the history of Russian-German relations from the middle of the nineteenth century to 1914. In his memory, calculations were kept about the development of industry in Germany and Prussia, the alignment of political forces, the characteristics of diplomats, and many biographies of generals. Kurakin was no longer a young man, wearing glasses, with gray temples, but with the enthusiasm of a young enlightened man, always ready to explain the incomprehensible, to share any knowledge, he knew how to listen and understand the interlocutor. Like every enthusiastic teacher, Kurakin, finding in Sazonov an exceptionally attentive and grateful listener,

briefly told him the history of the officer corps of East Prussia, spoke about the highly educated General Hans von Seeckt, the founder of the Wehrmacht after the defeat of Germany in 1918. And also about the fact that many officers were influenced by his lectures and reports read at the General Staff, and his doctrine: Germany must strengthen economic ties with the USSR and never allow a war on two fronts.

Sazonov sat spellbound and was ready to listen to Pyotr Petrovich all day long. Later, over tea, after he got acquainted with the case of Lisovetsky, at the request of Sazonov, he spoke in detail about the emergence of an organization of Ukrainian nationalists and their leader Stepan Bender. Sipping tea, Kurakin squinted his short-sighted eyes with pleasure and, sitting on his favorite horse - history, enthusiastically explained to Sazonov that in the pre-war period, pro-Soviet sentiments were great in Poland and especially in Western Ukraine - Galicia among trade unions, working youth and a significant part of the intelligentsia . There were many intellectuals and students in the ranks of the Communist Party of Poland. The party received moral and material assistance from Moscow through the Comintern and conducted successful agitation in the provinces among the workers and peasants during the difficult years of the crisis that engulfed almost the entire world. And against the backdrop of unemployment, the decline of industry and agriculture, Soviet Russia looked like a prosperous state!

In 1936, the Comintern expelled the Communist Party of Poland from its ranks, noting in its resolution that "... the Communist Party of Poland became a haven for spies and saboteurs ..." Thus, a political vacuum was formed: in Warsaw, the Social Democrats managed to survive and strengthen themselves, and in Western Ukraine in a short time The National Socialists created a movement for the autonomy of Galicia, drawing part of the intelligentsia, youth and wealthy peasantry to their side. And the communists lost their positions throughout Poland. And, finishing his brief

review, Kurakin said: - As you can see, Dmitry Vasilyevich, something always grows from scratch - nature does not tolerate emptiness! Now there is a lot of incomprehensible in the tactics of the OUN. We do not have documentary evidence from the Central Wire[27] that they embarked on the path of cooperation with the Germans. But Headquarters

The partisan movement has information that individual Bendera militants are in contact with the German police commandant's offices and are fighting against our partisans. Much contradictory and inconsistent is observed in their tactics; Stepan Bendera, after the arrival of the Germans, on the second day, spoke in Lvov at a rally of citizens. And as soon as he hinted at the creation of an independent Ukrainian state, he was immediately arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Germany, to a concentration camp for state criminals. But at the same time, the Germans from the nationalists created the SS division - Galicia. She holds the defense somewhere in the Lvov direction. As you can see, there are continuous contradictions, but we must take them into account ...

Dmitry Vasilyevich got used to Kurakin and during these two days he became attached to him with all his heart! Everything in him was different from that of many higher-ranking representatives of Smersh, who came to the division with various business affairs. The most encouraging thing is that he did not use foul language, he addressed those around him as "you". His superior colleagues borrowed from front-line front-line officers deliberately, needlessly rude treatment of others, bordering on insult and humiliation. Nobody in the war remembered when such a new style of behavior and communication with

downstream.

Before the war, our commanders, and especially the political staff (under the influence of the idea that their army is the flesh of the people - from the realization that it is so unique in the world and should be the best), were seized by the enthusiasm for introducing enlightenment and culture into it! The elimination of illiteracy, various circles, courses for junior commanders, preparatory courses for entering the academy, lectures on various topics, and especially comprehension of the basics of culture: behavior in the service, at home, when communicating with seniors and juniors in the service - such a rush to perfection, beauty could not but affect the appearance of the Red Army. Most of the commanders of all ranks were smart, polite, attentive, efficient. So it was in the personnel, pre-war army. Such an oya was remembered by the people! But the war, and Sazonov was a witness to this, gave rise to a new type of commander. They were assertive, rude, without a hint of compassion and mercy, and, most importantly, did not spare themselves.

and your subordinates! And where could these qualities come from in them, if the Supreme Commander himself in his directives indicated: "To fulfill the task of the Headquarters, regardless of any losses ..." No one was engaged in the culture and education of new officers in the conditions of the front. Before them was one task - to beat the enemy! And the rest was like a free app. And if an officer was literate, polite and courteous to his subordinates, but fought poorly, he is worthless! Such bosses did not respect and did not appreciate. But if the commander knew how to complete a combat mission, bend all his subordinates into an arc, speak only obscene language with them and occasionally not disdain assault, both the authorities and his soldiers were proud of such commanders. And the higher the position, the more one could expect frank rudeness, rudeness and neglect towards the bottom.

Many condemned this demeanor at the front, where they were accustomed to the worst - death. Rudeness and humiliation of human dignity were considered the costs of front-line life, they tried not to notice them and not pay attention. Dmitry Vasilyevich

thanked fate for sending him people like Chief of Staff Lepin and coordinator Kurakin. They were somewhat similar to each other and had very similar character traits. It will take a long time before Dmitry Vasilyevich receives an explanation for this: both of them in childhood tasted a fair portion of religious education, and one of the many commandments - to respect your neighbor as yourself - was absolutistically perceived and already fulfilled by them not as a religious dogma, but as a conscious life necessity.

Kurakin at the beginning of the war immediately ended up in summer, dusty Moscow with a blackout, he remembered its bombardment in the twentieth of July and the first panic of this city. After the creation of the Glavka with the participation of the Boss himself and the appointment of the former head of the Rostov Department of the NKVD BC Abakumov as the head of the Glavka as part of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, it was necessary to develop and create the structure of this machine, capable of performing not only internal control over the actions of large and small military leaders, but also to resist a formidable enemy. Such as Pyotr Petrovich - humanitarians with knowledge of the language, who have an idea of \u200b\u200bthe syst

analysis of information, but absolutely not representing the work of army counterintelligence in detail - there were not so many, and they all wanted to get to the front. He was sent to the newly formed department of Glavka, where the head was a nominee with a parochial education, but with a lively mind, the ability to determine the mood and guess the desire of the authorities at the slightest sign, who received his first career impetus in June 37 for the trial of major military leaders of the Red Army, where he showed his talent - to make an elephant out of a fly and turn white into black. He immediately guessed the qualities of an analyst in Kurakin and invited him to join the development group according to the structure of the special service. He reduced the justifications and variations worked out by Kurakin and his colleagues to a minimum and passed off to the leadership of the head office as his own, and then, having convinced himself of the abilities of Pyotr Petrovich and seeing him as a competitor, he succeeded in sending him to the

active army. The head of the special officers of the N-th army, Tumanov, appointed him the main coordinator for collecting and evaluating information aimed at identifying Abwehr agents in the combat zone of their army: the quality of their training, methods of legalization, communications,

and training centers. The reports compiled by Kurakin were clear and concise in content, they received approval from the leadership of the Directorate of Special Departments of the Western Front, which Colonel Tumanov was proud of when signing these documents. But they knew the name of the true author, and they already had an opinion about the need to transfer him to the Office, and Tumanov made desperate attempts to

keep Pyotr Petrovich at home. With his usual gentleness, as if consulting with Sazonov, Kurakin gave him some practical advice on the Lisovetsky case: to get permission to put him on the wanted list on the territory of the Smolensk region and to check by signs whether he was detained among those suspected of collaborating with the invaders. Discussing the course of all the events in the Lisovetsky case, Pyotr Petrovich said:

- Judging by your materials, he really could have fallen under the summer-autumn offensive of our troops, and, perhaps, he is already serving with us! This is the most profitable and safe option for him.

It makes no sense for him to go illegal in the liberated territory. He understands that he can fall under the military or police raid. Any advance on this territory is under the control of the NKVD, local detachments of "hawks". But the army is now his home! And he's like a needle in a haystack! I do not hide, Dmitry Vasilievich, it is very difficult, but you need to look for it! .. In the final report on the case, he noted promptly competent search

actions and wrote down recommendations: how and where to collect additional information on Lisovetsky. A few hours later, Sazonov sadly saw off Kurakin, as if he were a close person, and looked after him for a long time, until the steam-horse wagon disappeared around the bend into the spruce forest.

Chapter XV. PREPARATION FOR DENUSION

Preparations for the inspection of the department and the arrival of Kurakin distracted Dmitry Vasilyevich from Bondarev, but by all indications, he seriously took up the verification of candidates for the reconnaissance group. And Sazonov was advised to go to the department of the neighboring division on the right flank, where there were already inspectors. The local special officer, the good-natured Ukrainian Denisenko, explained in detail where and what the inspectors were looking for, gave a lot of good advice and, already at the end of the

conversation, smiling slyly, dedicated the inspectors' reception to the domestic part: "You, Sazonov, must understand that they are living people and as Karl Marx said, nothing human is alien to them! Therefore, make sure that their life is up to standard, create comfortable conditions for them," he said with a Ukrainian accent and explained about the premises, clean linen, and food. - But most importantly, you arrange a bathhouse for them in the evening. A person gets great pleasure and through this softens his body and soul, and do not be shy - after the bath, put them an alcohol drink and tea with a snack ... What, you say, from snacks? So you give the command, let them boil the meat. You say there is no meat, but you try! It would be nice to have sauerkraut or cucumbers, but these are delicacies. Here, they say, on the left flank, in the division of Kuchava, several villages have been preserved, and there you can exchange everything your heart desires for junk, and even lard! Put a smart lad on a horse, give him linen, uniforms and, most importantly, shoes - they appreciate the boots that we recently received - English, leather, with thick soles, with horseshoes, and he will turn around in a day and bring you what you r

Sazonov thanked Denisenko for his advice and, sitting on his humble gelding, went to his place. Returning, he immediately sent Sergeant Mikhailov, experienced and accurate in these matters, to the territory of the divisional commander Kuchava, equipping him with some of the surplus clothing allowance and issuing him a travel certificate. Then he called his faithful orderly Egorov and dictated to him what needs to be done to receive guests. He carefully wrote everything down, and then said: "You rely on me, comrade

Captain, I will arrange everything in the best possible way. He, indeed, justified his peaceful profession as a caretaker: he carried out a general cleaning of the dugout with the soldiers, scraping off the trampled floors, and evicted the department duty officer to the dugout to the security soldiers, made two screens from the tent canvas and closed the doorways. In addition, they dug a hole and built a new latrine, lined it with spruce branches, and laid the path to it with bark and bundles of willow twigs.

And the next day, in the evening, a tired but satisfied Sergeant Mikhailov returned with exchange trophies. He took off his pack and began to untie a sack of potatoes, a birch bark barrel with sauerkraut, cucumbers and a dozen pickled apples, and then from the bottom of the pack he took out a piece of lard wrapped in a piece of linen. After dinner, he came to Sazonov and began to talk about the life of the villagers of two villages, cut off from the outside world by impenetrable swamps.

- There, comrade captain, the German did not even set foot and there were no partisans - there were swamps and bogs all around. I left the horse with the forester, he lives on the banks of the river, and he floated me in his boat through the canals to the first village, and then to the second - it is called the Big Bug. So, I'll tell you that its inhabitants only knew by hearsay that the war had happened - the Germans were on the side both during the offensive and during the retreat. Ours are ten kilometers away, not accessible by land, only with a guide - all around the swamps are impassable. The forest is spruce - impassable thicket. Well, the people live like they did under Soviet rule, and even better, as they say. No preparations, no taxes, no worries from the authorities. The Germans did not even try to get through - there only troops can be thrown through the air! And one respected old man had a vision: as if Comrade Kalinin had allowed him to build a chapel, now they are praying. They have a school, but the children are only taught to read and write, there is no one to teach other sciences. And they themselves say that great literacy is not needed in their lives. The village is run by an invalid from the encirclement, one-armed, and with him a council of old people. So they established a "dry" law in their country, and whoever kicks out even a drop of moonshine will immediately be whipped right at the gathering ...

Sazonov released Mikhailov and did not know that he would meet the foreman of the platoon and Bondarev would accidentally overhear their conversation and that now he would know all the details of the sergeant's trip for food. It was already late, but Bondarev was not up to sleep. He already

mentally sorted out the accusations against his boss! The first is abuse of office and the second is the squandering of military property. From Sazonov himself, he heard that the formidable Colonel Tumanov was a demanding and captious boss, and if he became aware of the abuses of his subordinate, who should identify and nip them in the bud so that it would be discourteous to others, then, undoubtedly, he could immediately remove Sazonov from positions, and who, if not him, should head the department?! It was he - a vigilant and principled communist - who discovered the abuse, reported, as it should be, to his superior ... and he made the appropriate decision. Silent midnight. The gunners at the forefront move a little, listening to the sounds of the

night. Bondarev is also awake, his head is burning with thoughts, sleep is as if it had never happened, and he is feverishly considering how to bring all this to the attention of Colonel Tumanov. The old, tried and tested method - to send an anonymous letter - was no good! He knew it was a long way, he needed to go faster! He could not go to Tumanov at the army headquarters, realizing that this would require permission from his boss. What to do?! You can't delay! Knocking Sazonov down in one go is a rare stroke of luck! From excitement and confidence in his imminent victory, his thoughts were confused, he became hot from them. The greatest pleasure is to imagine how his boss would be dismantled at a closed party meeting. He already clearly saw the table, Kuzakov sitting behind it, his deputy, the party organizer of the division headquarters and other party officials. The meeting is very strict in the Party way and principled in the Bolshevik way. And he is the chief prosecutor in the personal case of the politically insufficiently trained, weak organizer of operational and educational work among the personnel of the department - the communist captain Sazonov D.V.! He thought: "It is imperative to sharpen the wording of the accusation, briefly assess and conclude on the egregious facts of Sazonov's activities and confirm the decision of the army's Smersh to remove him from office ..." Now this captain is in my hands, "and with this vengeful thought, Bondarev forgot good sleep. And in the morning he no longer walked, but ran, panting heavily, to the political

department to share what compromising materials he had obtained on Sazonov. Kuzakov listened and even perked up. On his small forehead

horizontal wrinkles have gathered - a clear sign of the major's mental work! And there was something to think about. Kuzakov himself did not want to get directly involved in this matter: let Bondarev try to do everything himself, but he was willing to help.

- You say that we must urgently inform Tumanov. So, one of these days we will finish installing a secure connection. This, of course, is not "HF" [28] , but still the Germans are too tough. It is intended for communication with the higher leadership of the army and the front. Now I'll see if your Tumanov is among the subscribers," and, looking into a small green booklet, he added: "Yes, Colonel Tumanov, number 005. They say that tomorrow they will bring a special telephone and install it at headquarters, but permission to negotiate will be give Colonel Lepin, and in his absence - the head of the operational department, Major Zharikov. You can call when Lepin is absent, and we will agree with Zharikov. But you need to prepare and report briefly, without any stuttering. And focus on malpractice and vested interests. At the same time, you need to speak convincingly, I hope that you will practice. Consider the conversation on the new connection should be no more than fifteen minutes. They say it turns off automatically. And I'll tell you more, you picked up a good "material" for Sazonov, but it would be better to add about his moral character. You say there is no texture, but I'll tell you what to look for among the environment. So you say that he is picky, and you find someone who is dissatisfied with his exactingness and let him tell you: maybe Sazonov put it in a motherly manner during a conversation - this is good for morality. But if you found some fact of apoliticality, for example, if during a conversation he disrespectfully spoke about his superiors, political or party events, then it would be a wonderful side dish for the main course, as my former boss, Member of the Military Council, General Grigory Afanasyevich! That would be a separate topic for hearing him in my political department! And you say that you have little time for this - you need to work harder, Bondarev, spin and add momentum! Come on, penetrate the masses, search, and you will find what you need there! Usek? - And with a sense of superiority Kuzakov looked at Bondarev.

With these words, he ended the conversation and hurried to sit down for the materials of the report on the topic: "Issues of party-ideological education in the army", prepared for him by a former teacher of literature and the Russian language, now a junior instructor of the political department, junior lieutenant Maidanov. Reading it, he did not suspect that his henchman deftly compiled from the pre-war magazines "Bolshevik" materials on this topic, where it was dedicated to production workers. And he diluted it with examples of military courage, patriotism, loyalty to communist ideals, service according to the Leninist-Stalinist precepts in front-line conditions until complete victory over fascism. The headmaster secretly hoped to present a report to the front-line political department and stake his claim there as a creatively thinking leader. Leaving his adjutant position, from the retinue of a member of the Military Council to the position of chief of a division not of the Guards, but of an ordinary rifle division, he dreamed of being known as a sort of father of a commissar. The laurels of the Furman hero did not give rest to many then. But, alas, those times have passed, everything has changed, and he, the soul and leader of the Communists of the division, is in the second echelon of headquarters and away from the divisional commander, and he does not even notice his commissar, and now Lepin is next to him, but he should was Kuzakov to take this place! "They say that Lepin is one of the former military specialists, but in general it can be seen from the bearing - he walks as if he had swallowed a crowbar! Now, if Bondarev breaks into the bosses, then together with him you can somehow shove Lepin - to study or to be promoted, and then our division commander! Such petty, vain thoughts haunted Kuzakov. And after all, he intended to speak in a report about the lofty, disinterested interests of a communist, his sacred duty to the people, but he himself got in touch with this tedious fool Bondarev, condoned and advised him in vile deeds, is that really communist, huh ?! But he immediately stopped self-digging - a fit of conscientiousness disappeared with the thought: "Am I the only one like that ?! I've already seen enough of the nomenklatura people, secretaries of regional committees, city committees, chairmen of various councils, generals from GlavPU - all as one, if possible, they pull the blanket over themselves! It seemed that General Kuznetsov was conscience itself, pure and infallible, like Nikolai the Saint, but it was he who appointed Lieutenant Colonel Khramtsov head of the political department of the corps because he, being a command

fed the relatives of Kuznetsov, who lived in the suburbs. And this, despite the fact that Khramtsov was not even in the reserve for promotion and had a reprimand for collective drinking, but was approved in positions on the military council unanimously.

Report the head of the division liked numerous the words from the party arsenal: "we will justify the trust of the party and the people", "surrounded by the care and attention of the CPSU (b)", "the communist of the active army has only one right: where it is difficult, to always be ahead", "thanks to a brilliant plan our Supreme Commander-in-Chief was broken by the Red Army's spine to the fascist beast" and many other ringing, striking straight into the top ten vivid metaphors and comparisons. "Ay yes Maidanov - well done. And it's not for nothing that he is a teacher of literature - he writes fluently, he must be encouraged! He always envied the educated. Kuzakov himself, only at the beginning of his service, called up as a party member, was in the courses of political workers, and then his adjutant fate began to spin, and continuously, for ten years, almost without vacation, with daily separations, he did not even remember about his studies. No it is not true! One day he turned to his superiors with a request to send him to study. General Levchenko, not an evil person by nature, but harassed by numerous arrests in the North Caucasian District, and himself expecting arrest from day to day, said to him: "You, Kuzakov, don't think about it, your service as a guarantor and adjutant pulls more, than two academies. Be proud of it!" More Kuzakov did not stutter about it and remained with primary education. He knew how to read smartly, and to impose a resolution - so he had a lot of experience in this part!

And Bondarev at that time sat down to prepare an oral denunciation to Colonel Tumanov. Here he gave free rein to his imagination, accusing Sazonov of undermining the combat readiness of the division, attributing to him the decomposition of the department and the squandering of military property! He believed that Tumanov, after listening to him, would immediately take action! It's been a long time since Bondarev worked so "creatively"! He sat in his compartment, sweating from excitement and anger, and kept writing and writing! No, he did not remember that when he had difficulties at work, Sazonov unobtrusively, kindly gave him advice and taught him the basics of service without a sense of superiority! And, of course, Bondarev forgot that his boss, whom he is now denouncing, accusing him of everything

mortal sins, saved his life during the shelling! Considering that Sazonov was in his hands, he did not even want to remember that he had given him the task of checking the reconnaissance group. And that it must be completed within the specified time frame. Confident that an additional check would not give anything, he dashed off several certificates about meetings and conversations with informants who were assigned to double-check previously received information on candidates for the reconnaissance group. He did not hold meetings and conversations with awareness, believing that this was unnecessary red tape and a whim of his boss. And the fact that he committed an official forgery did not bother him! He was so confident in each of the five! And especially in this Belarusian Knyazhich! Considering it his acquired property, Bondarev had no doubts about its reliability. Of the five, only Knyazhich could not be checked at the place of birth, but Sazonov, just in case, sent a request to the Headquarters of the partisan movement about his verification in

Grodno. The results of the check of all candidates at the former places of service were positive and only Knyazhich raised several questions, from his part they reported that he was missing in July, and hospital documents confirm that he entered there in early September. He himself explained that he was shell-shocked and almost does not remember how many days he lay in the company medical unit, then in the store, and then in the hospital. And everything seems to be true, but the discrepancies are significant! However, all doubts were resolved in favor of the verifiable. Because everyone wanted to quickly prepare the group and report to the leadership. Most of all, Bondarev wanted this! And now all five of them were sent to undergo an accelerated intelligence training course. Sazonov from the very beginning, when he had just received the order to select and check the front-line reconnaissance group, did not know and could not know that surrounded by General Abakumov and, of course, with the approval of the Supreme Commander, the idea was born - to have his own intelligence! But the high authorities did not want to explain the idea, why and why, in parallel with army intelligence, their own, "Smershevskaya" intelligence was being created! Old-timers remembered that the service of the Special Departments at the beginning of the war[29] was transferred from the People's Commissariat of Defense to the formidable and intimidating NKVD. This was done on the personal instructions of the Supreme. The calculation was simple. The special officers became independent in their service from the army command and, along v

Submit your information! And in the spring of forty-three, when shoulder straps were introduced, and there were significant successes at the front, the Supreme Commander again returned his "eyes and ears" to the defense system. And, I must say, back in those days, with the introduction of a new form, the special officers noted the displeasure of some people from the former commissar staff. They were quietly indignant and grumbled that they shed their blood in a civil war against the whites, the gold-chasers, and, they say, it was not at all necessary to inherit the form of class enemies! Abakumov reported on these sentiments, and the Supreme Commander immediately explained to the doubters in a brief imperative form that this should be regarded as a return to the traditions of the Russian army, and immediately everyone fell silent! And all the multiple "Glavpurovskaya army" through the party political bodies, the Komsomol, noting the

transition to a new form, orally and in writing verbalized and lavished praise of His wisdom! But why were two intelligence services created in the army?! There were rumors that the Supreme Commander himself decided so to improve the system of rechecks! There was also talk of eggs

to be kept in different baskets, and the emergence of a healthy spirit of competition between scouts. And even these days, Moscow, with a generous sovereign hand, appropriated and promoted general ranks in the front-line counterintelligence departments, and its boss was awarded the rank of colonel general! Meanwhile, the Western Front, exhausted by the autumn offensive battles, seemed to have frozen in the December days, and continued to stand, interrupted by local battles to improve positions, artillery duels, searches for scouts and sniper fire. The front command tried its best to show the activity and combativeness of its units and demanded from their commanders to haunt the enemy and keep him in suspense. But the enemy did not show concern, did not get nervous and quietly hibernated in advance competently fortified and equipped positions, occupying, if possible, all the heights, and also fired at our roads, artillery positions from long-range guns, sometimes, in all likelihood, to maintain their

combat spirit! Our front lived its difficult life in the forest swampy regions and waited in the wings. He will wait for him, and at the height of summer the Belarusian balcony will be destroyed to pieces, and the generals once